



A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM

WHEN DREAMS TAKE FLIGHT





The route to your roots

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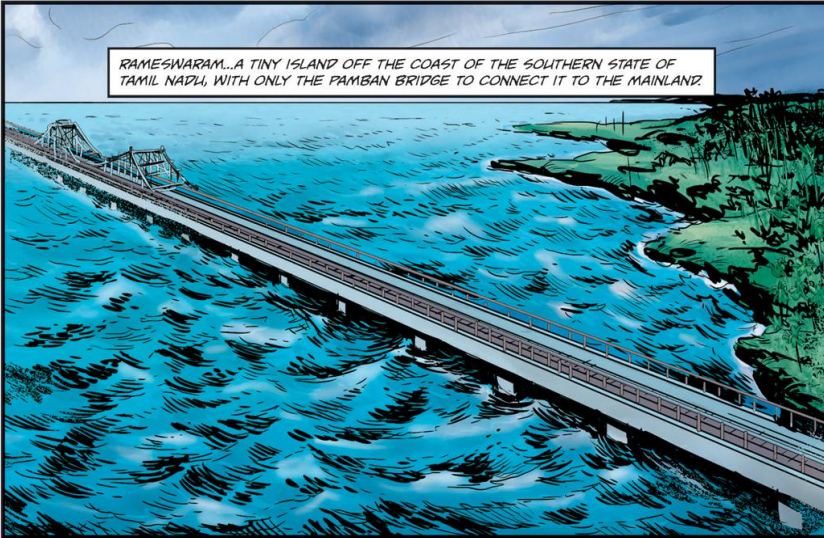
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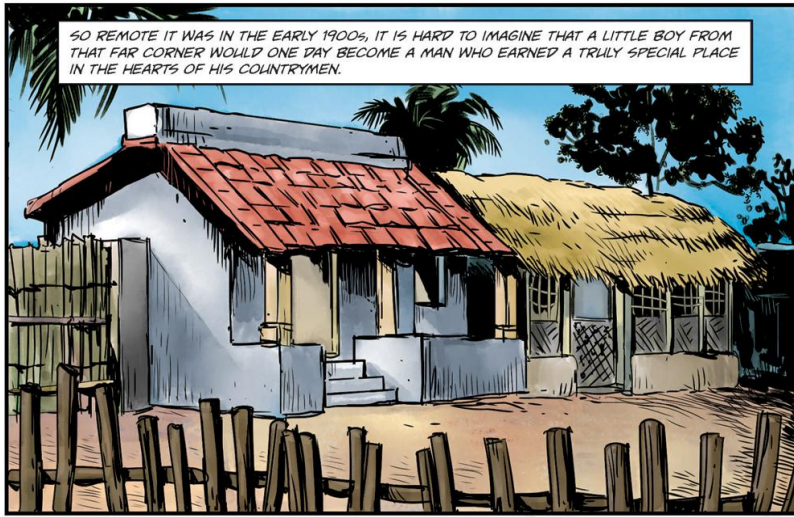
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A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM

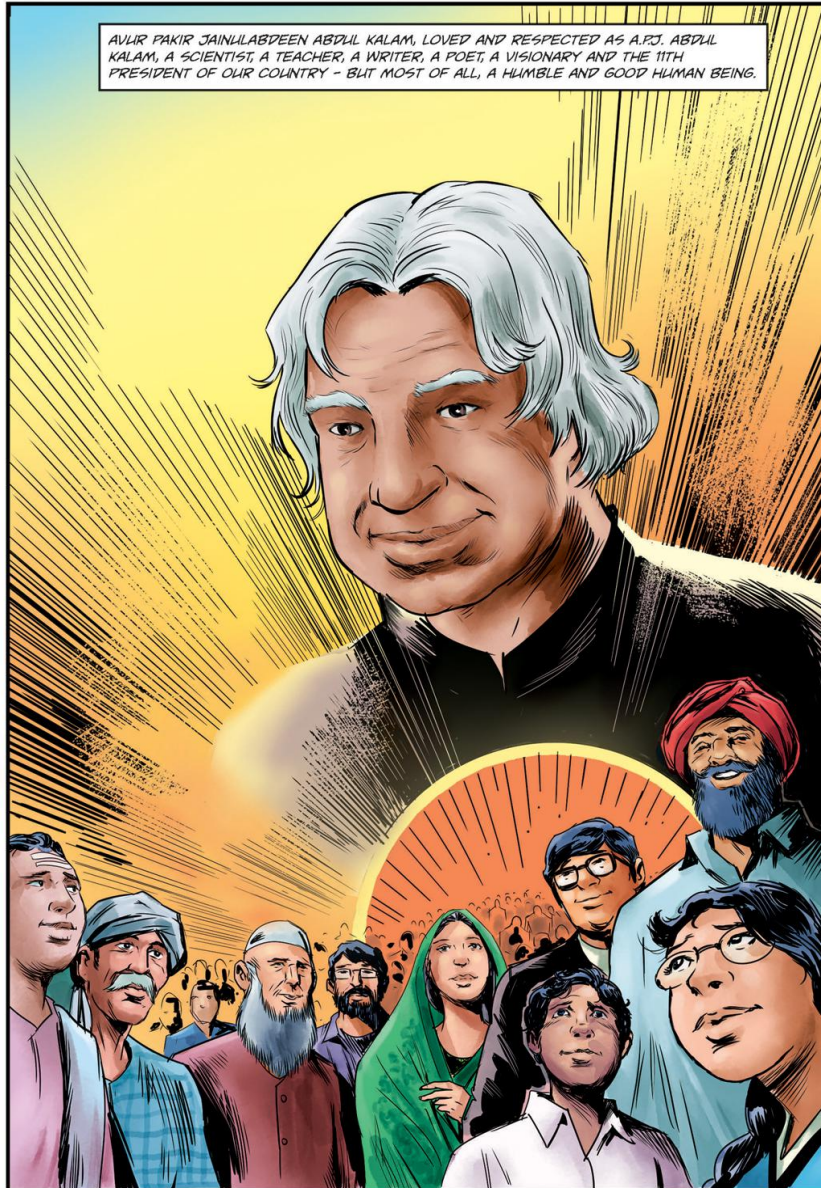
RAMESWARAM...A TINY ISLAND OFF THE COAST OF THE SOUTHERN STATE OF TAMIL NADU, WITH ONLY THE PAMBAN BRIDGE TO CONNECT IT TO THE MAINLAND.



SO REMOTE IT WAS IN THE EARLY 1900s, IT IS HARD TO IMAGINE THAT A LITTLE BOY FROM THAT FAR CORNER WOULD ONE DAY BECOME A MAN WHO EARNED A TRULY SPECIAL PLACE IN THE HEARTS OF HIS COUNTRYMEN.



A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM



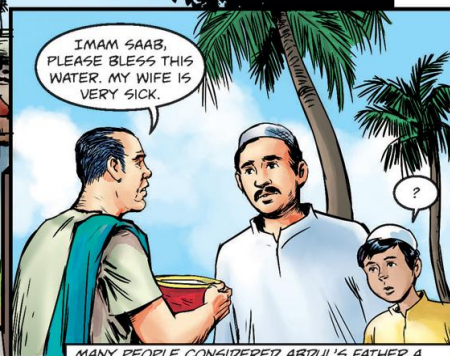
BORN ON 15 OCTOBER, 1931, ABDUL WAS THE YOUNGEST CHILD OF JAINULABDEEN AND ASHIAMMA. HIS FATHER WAS THE IMAM OF THE LOCAL MOSQUE AND ABDUL GREW UP SURROUNDED BY COCONUT TREES, THE SEA, THE WIND AND THE CALL FOR PRAYER.



WHY DO SO MANY PEOPLE VISIT OUR TOWN, BAWA*?

OH, WE ARE LUCKY WE LIVE IN SUCH A HOLY TOWN, ABDUL. DO YOU KNOW THAT THIS IS WHERE LORD RAMA BUILT THE BRIDGE TO GO TO LANKA AND RESCUE HIS WIFE, SITA?

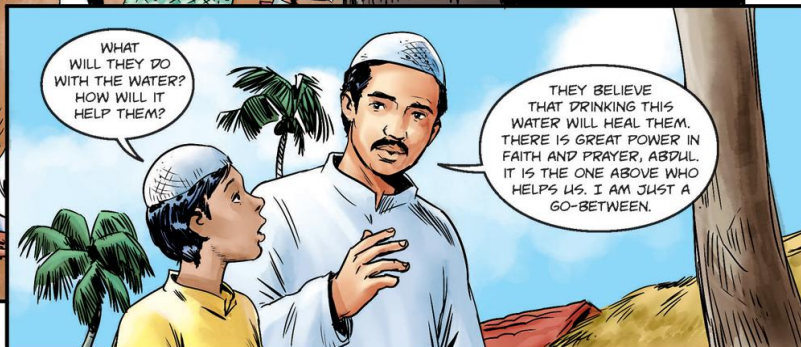
ON THEIR WAY BACK, SITA HERSELF MADE THE LINGAM* THAT IS IN THE RAMANATHASWAMY TEMPLE.



IMAM SAAB, PLEASE BLESS THIS WATER. MY WIFE IS VERY SICK.

?

MANY PEOPLE CONSIDERED ABDUL'S FATHER A HEALER AND BROUGHT HIM WATER INTO WHICH HE DIPPED HIS FINGERS WHILE CHANTING PRAYERS.

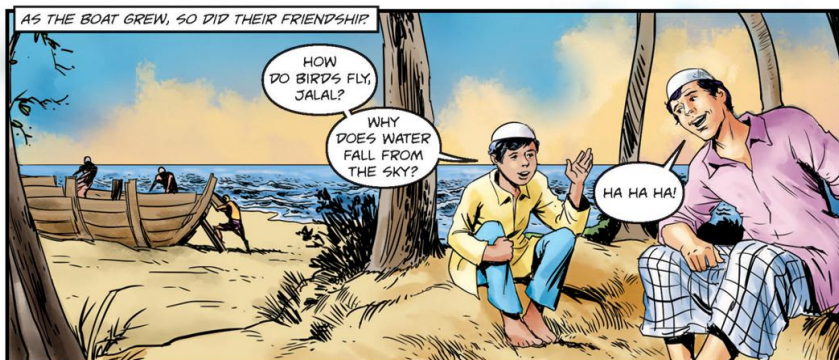
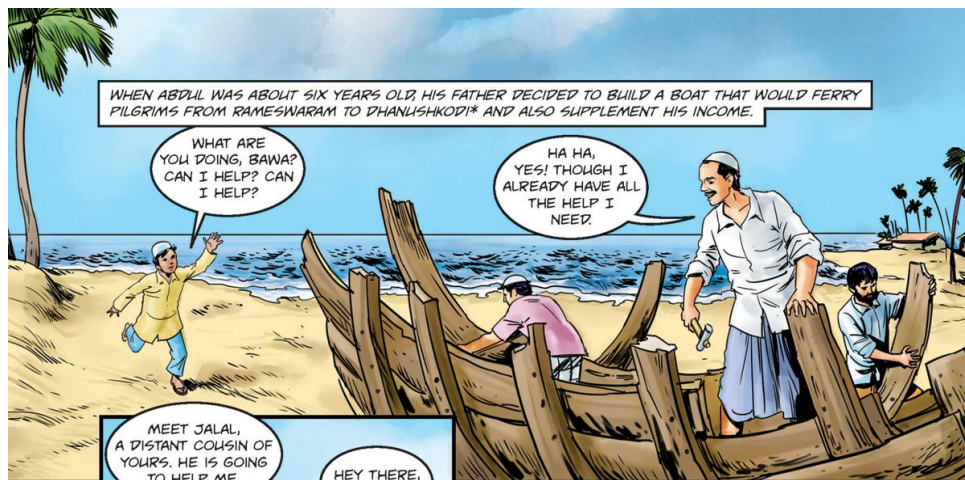


WHAT WILL THEY DO WITH THE WATER? HOW WILL IT HELP THEM?

THEY BELIEVE THAT DRINKING THIS WATER WILL HEAL THEM. THERE IS GREAT POWER IN FAITH AND PRAYER, ABDUL. IT IS THE ONE ABOVE WHO HELPS US. I AM JUST A GO-BETWEEN.

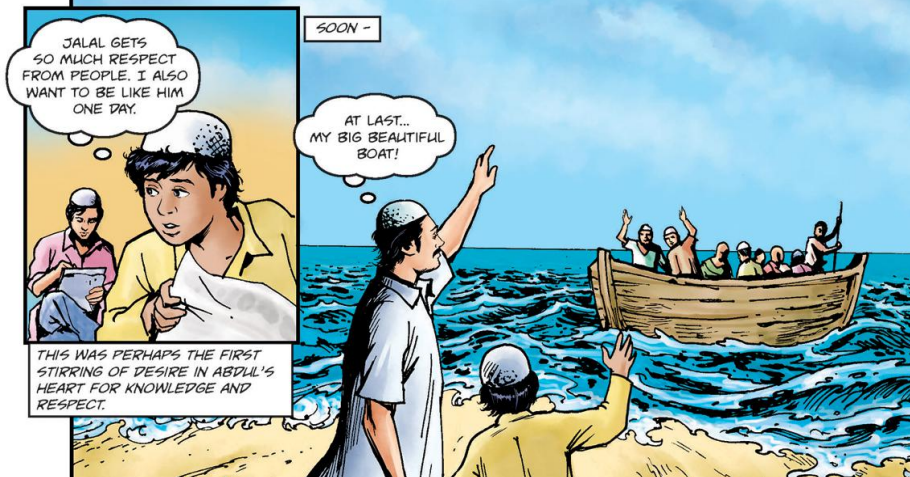
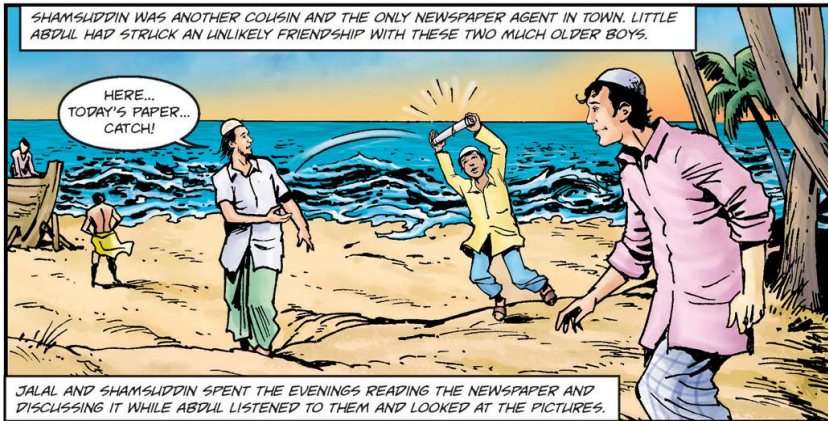
*FATHER

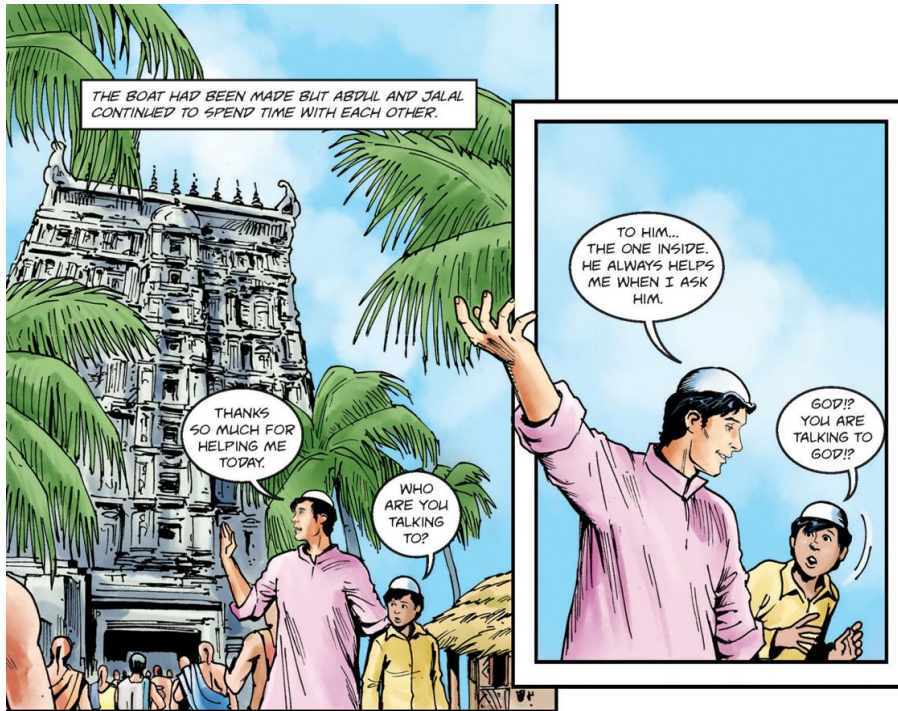
*SYMBOL OF SHIVA

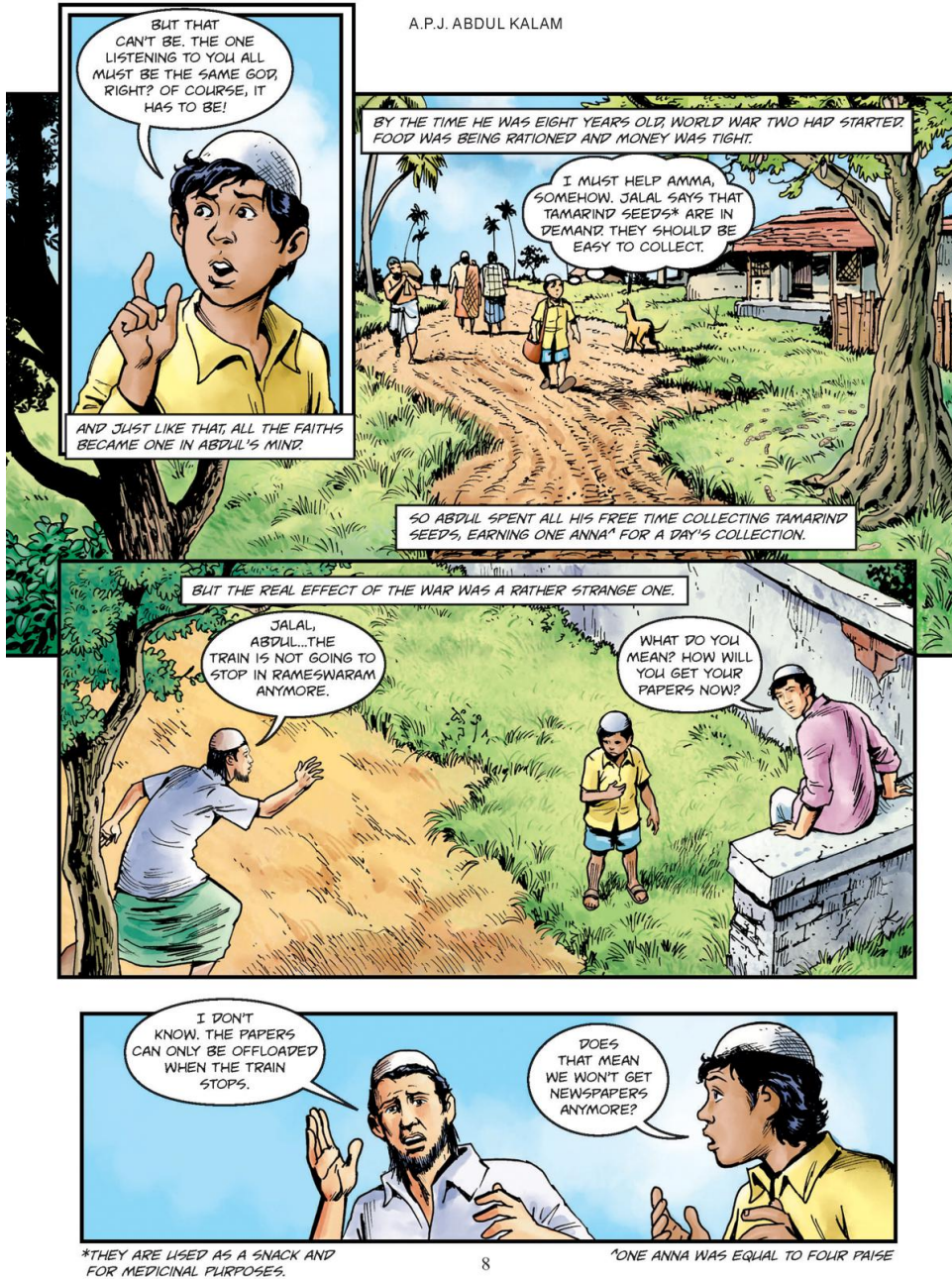


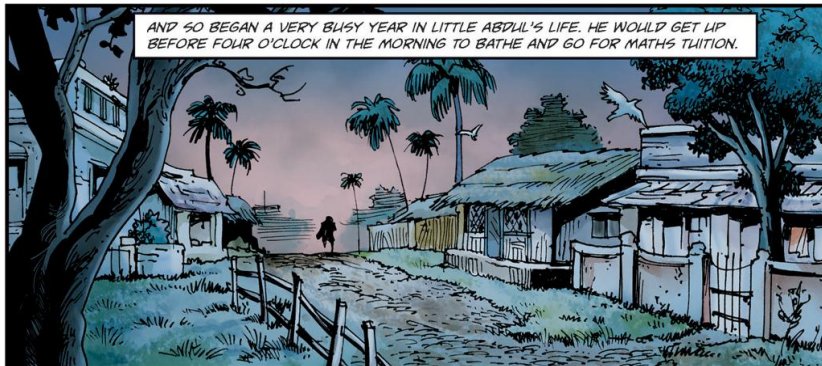
*A TOWN AT THE SOUTH-EASTERN END OF PAMBAN ISLAND, DHANUSHKODI WAS COMPLETELY DESTROYED IN A CYCLONE IN 1964 AND IS NOW ONLY A 'GHOST TOWN'.











*JALAL USED TO CALL HIM AZAD POSSIBLY A REFERENCE TO HIS NAMESAKE, THE FREEDOM FIGHTER ABUL KALAM AZAD.

THEN HIS FATHER WOULD TAKE HIM TO ARABIC SCHOOL TO LEARN THE QIRAN SHARIF...



...AFTER WHICH HE WOULD RUSH TO THE TRAIN STATION AND WAIT FOR THE NEWSPAPERS TO ARRIVE.



HERE, I'M
HERE! THROW
THE BUNDLE!

ABDUL WOULD THEN RUN
AROUND TOWN DELIVERING
THE NEWSPAPERS.



AFTER A FULL DAY AT SCHOOL,
HE WOULD GO ALL AROUND TOWN
AGAIN, COLLECTING THE NEWSPAPER
DUES AND THEN GIVE THEM TO
SHAMSUDDIN, WHO WOULD PAY HIM
HIS DAILY WAGES.

HE STILL HAD FRIENDS TO PLAY
WITH AND HOMEWORK TO DO...



HERE
AMMA, THIS
MIGHT HELP
YOU!

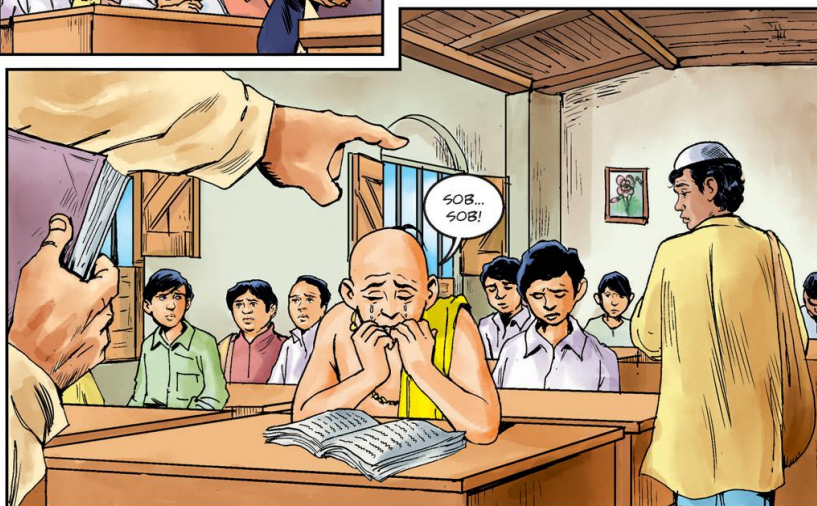
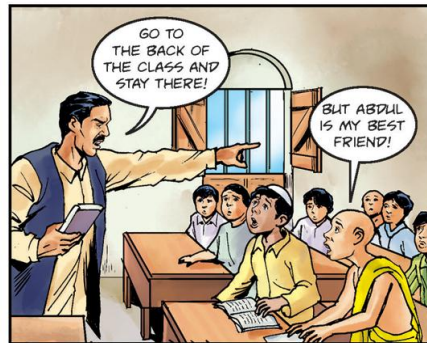
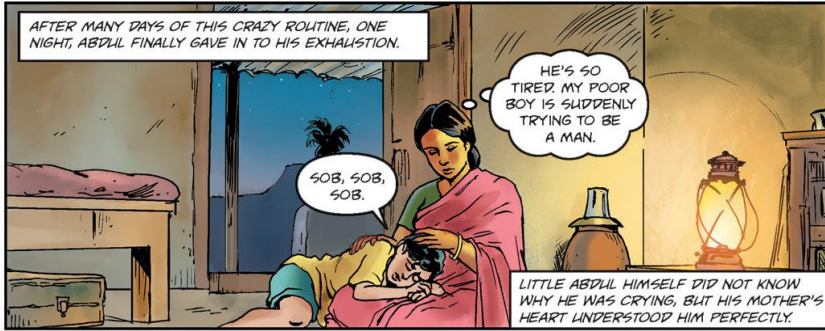
ABDUL,
MY BIG LITTLE
BOY!

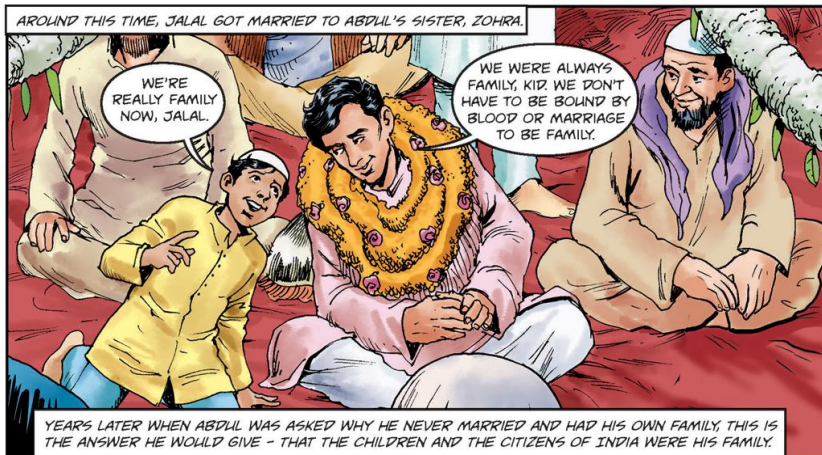
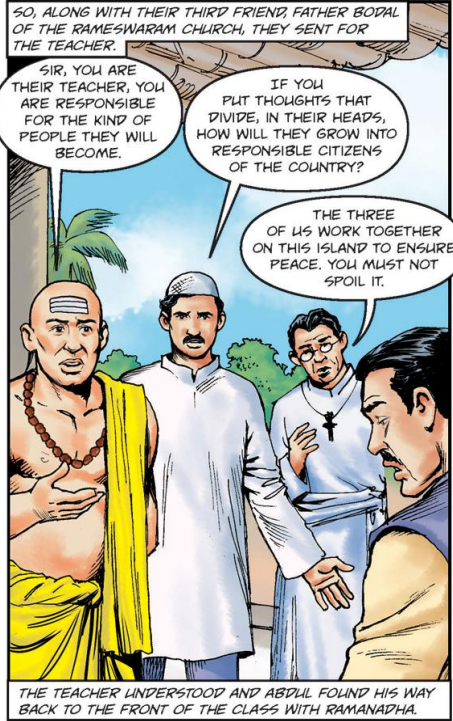


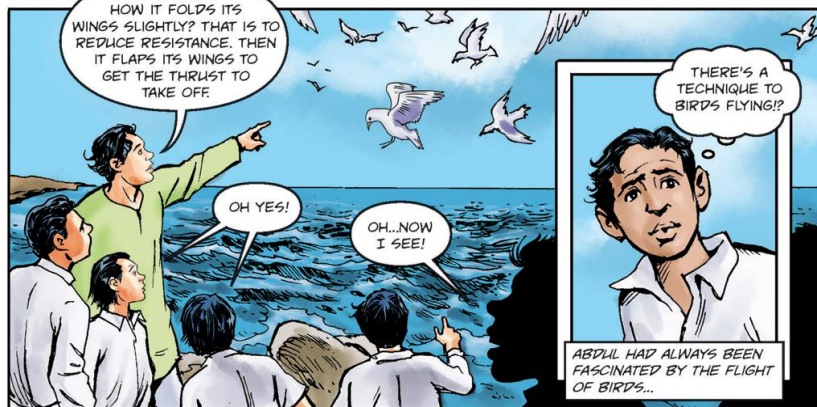
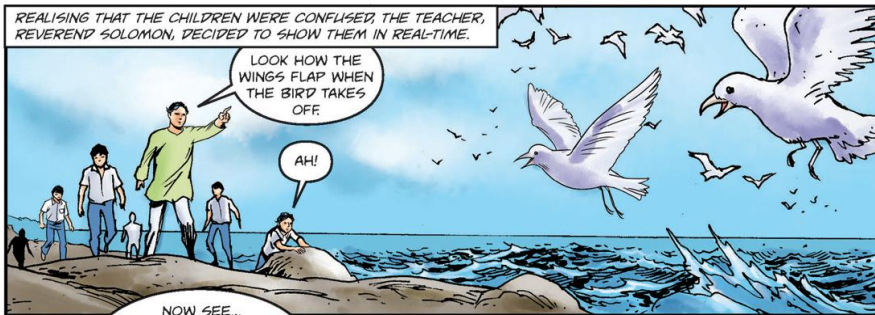
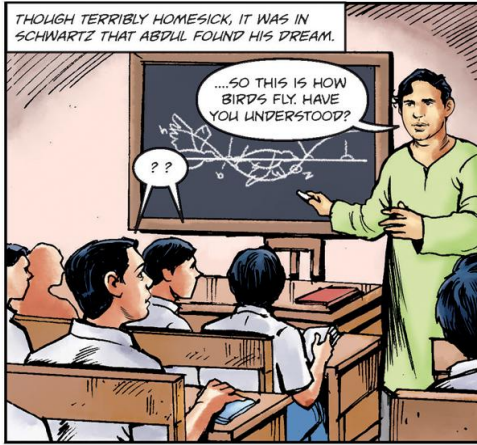
BY EIGHT O'CLOCK HE WOULD
REACH HOME FOR BREAKFAST AND
THEN HEAD TO SCHOOL. WHEN HIS
CLASSMATES WERE JUST STARTING
THEIR DAY, HE WAS ALMOST HALFWAY
THROUGH HIS!

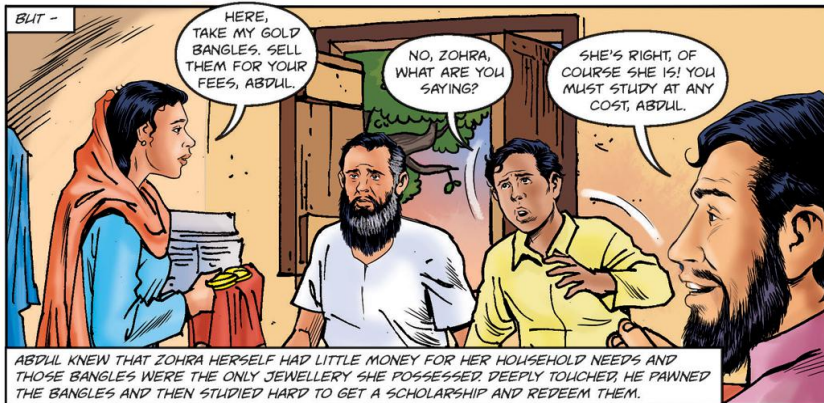
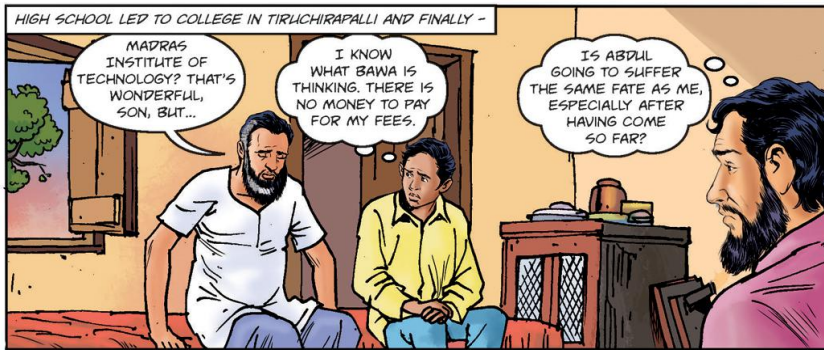
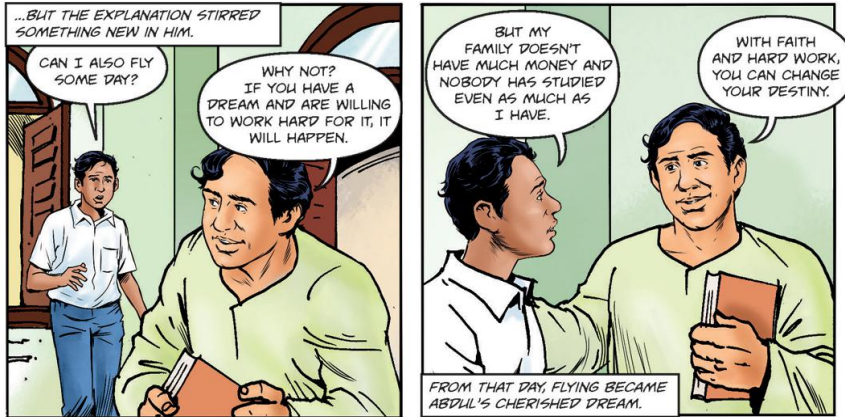
...AFTER WHICH, HE WOULD FALL
INTO AN EXHAUSTED SLEEP

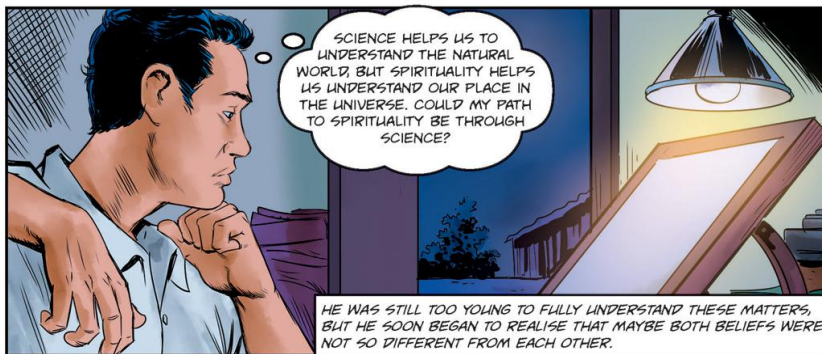
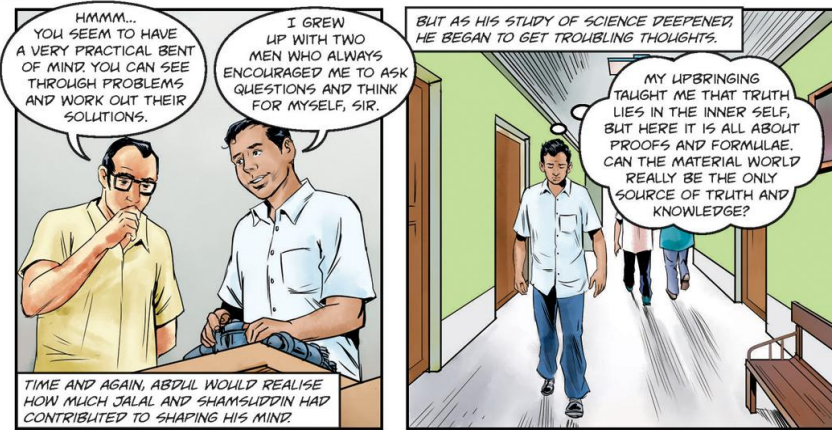
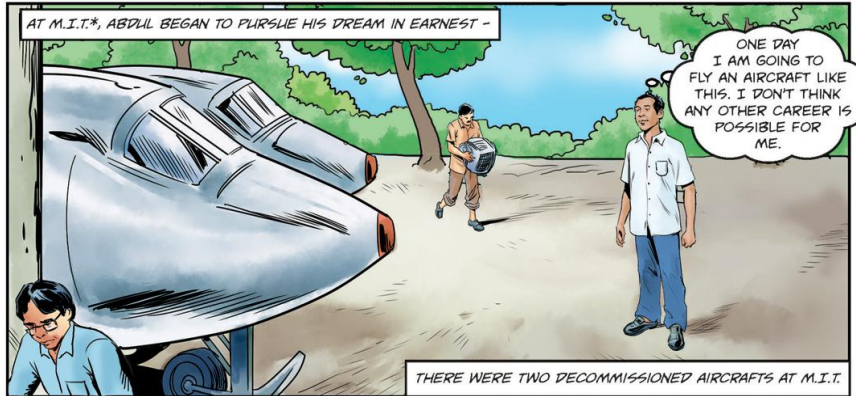




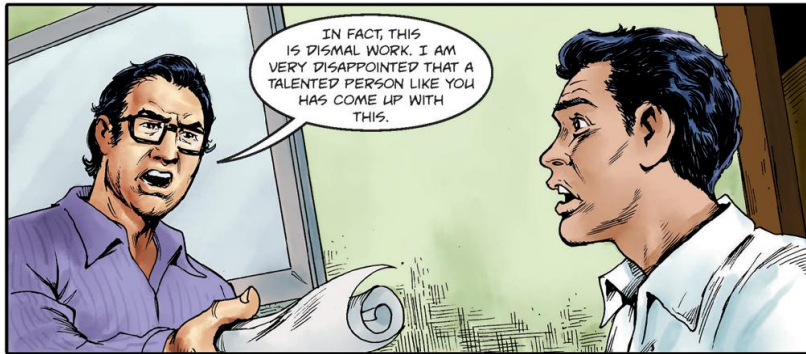
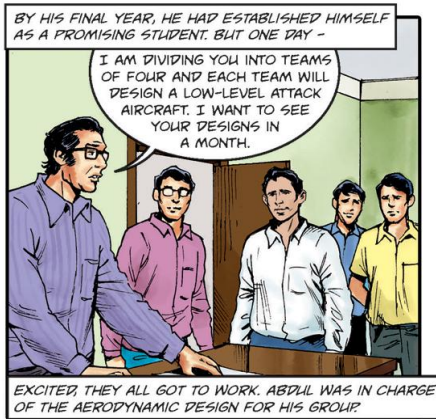
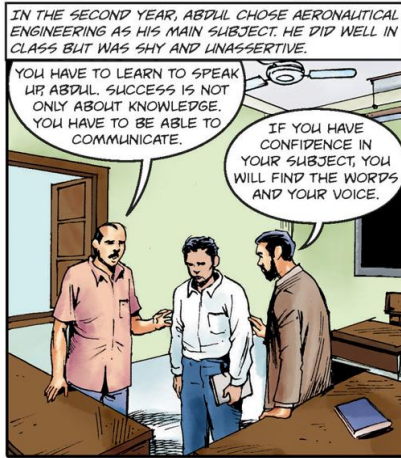


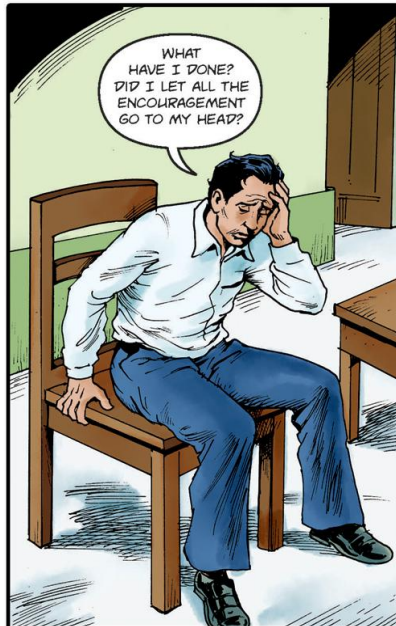
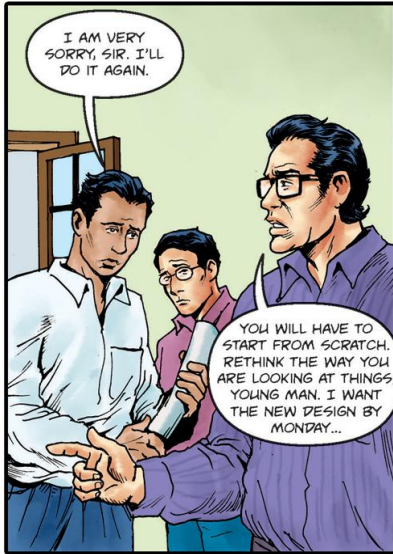


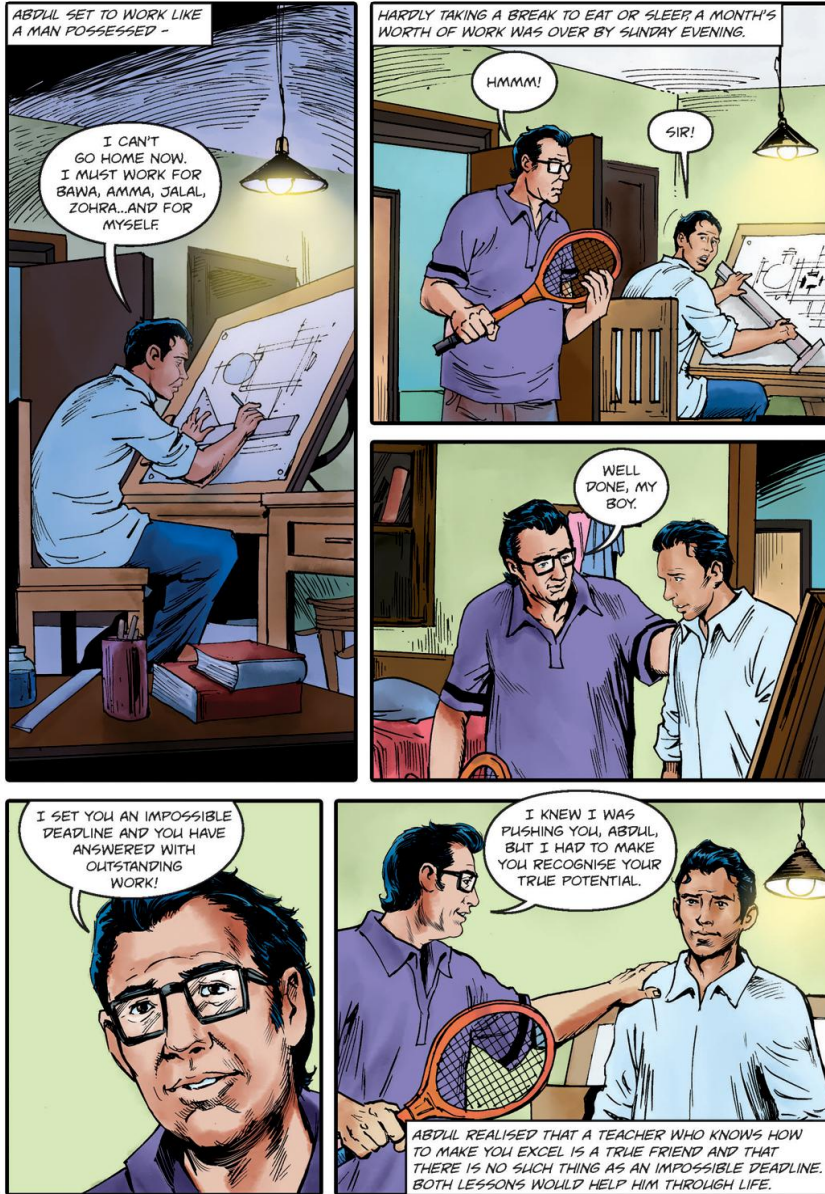




*MADRAS INSTITUTE OF TECHNOLOGY







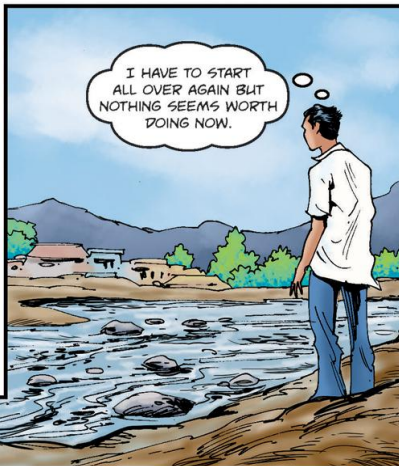
WITH M.I.T., HIS FORMAL EDUCATION WAS OVER. HE GAVE AN INTERVIEW WITH THE DIRECTORATE OF TECHNICAL DEVELOPMENT AND PRODUCTION (DTD&P) AIR, AT THE MINISTRY OF DEFENCE IN DELHI AND THEN WENT TO DEHRADUN TO TRY OUT FOR THE AIR FORCE.



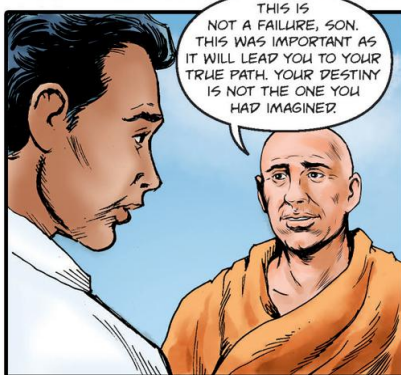
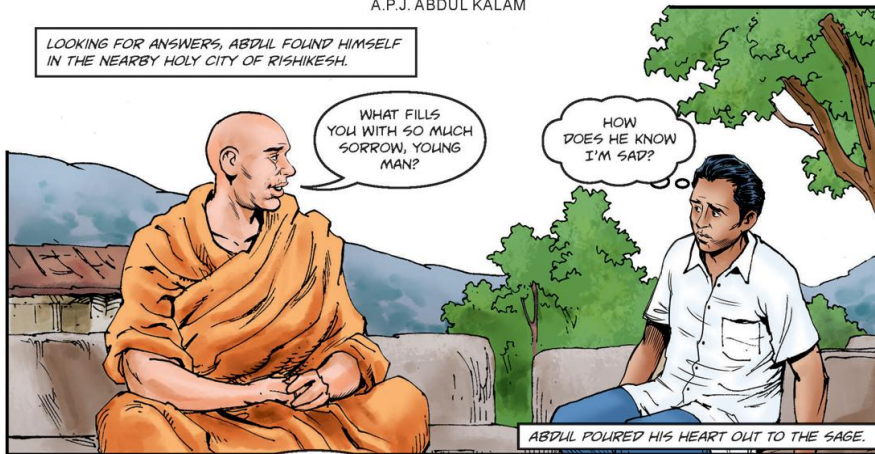
IN TRUTH, ABDUL HAD ALSO WORKED HARD ON HIMSELF THOUGH STILL A SHY, SMALL-TOWN BOY, HE HAD ATTEMPTED TO COMMUNICATE WITH DIFFERENT PEOPLE AND MAKE HIMSELF MORE SELF-CONFIDENT.



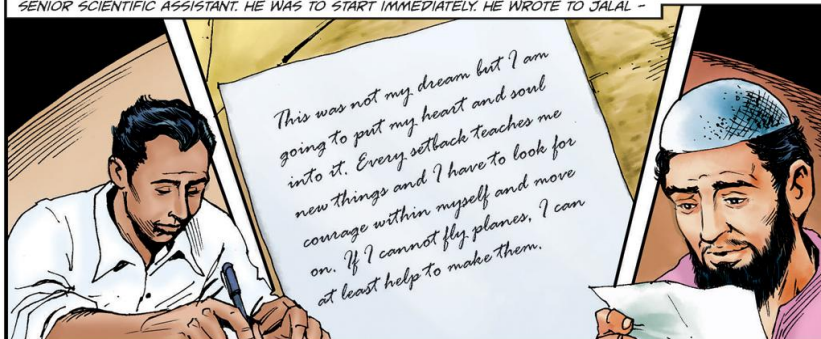
HE COULD NOT BELIEVE IT. HIS AIR FORCE DREAM HAD BEEN SHATTERED - THE ONLY DREAM HE HAD EVER HAD AND WORKED SO HARD FOR - AND BY SO NARROW A MARGIN.

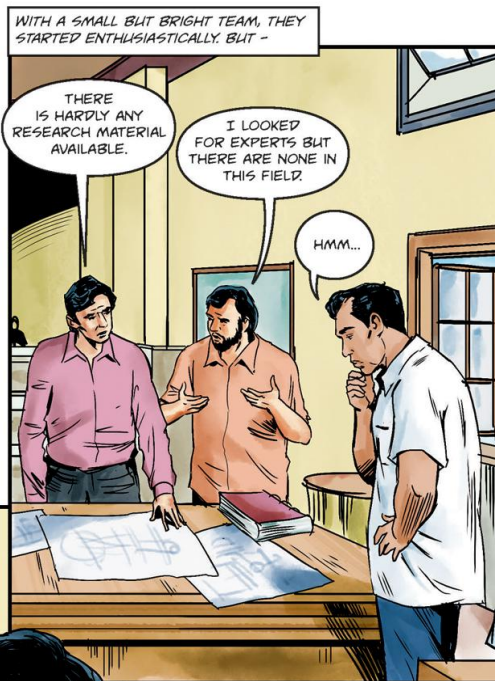


LOOKING FOR ANSWERS, ABDUL FOUND HIMSELF IN THE NEARBY HOLY CITY OF RISHIKESH.

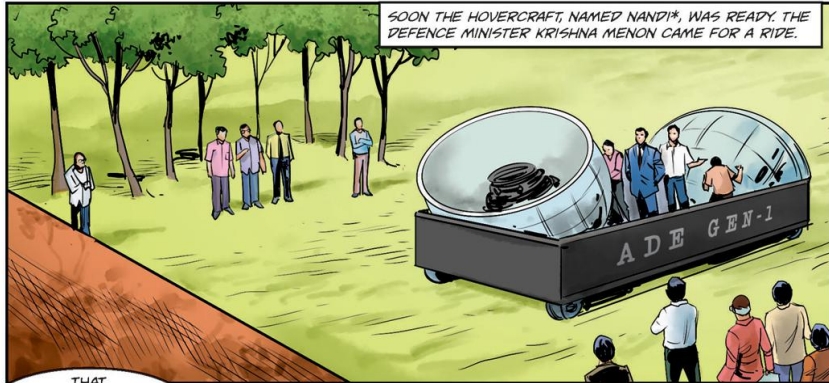


RECHARGED, ABDUL WENT BACK TO DELHI WHERE HE FOUND THAT HE HAD BEEN ACCEPTED AT DTD&P AS SENIOR SCIENTIFIC ASSISTANT. HE WAS TO START IMMEDIATELY. HE WROTE TO JALAL -

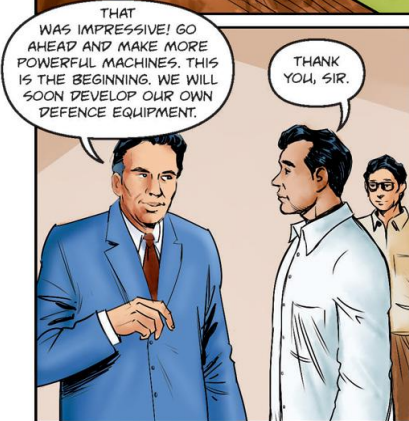




*NOW BENGALURU
*OPERATIONS

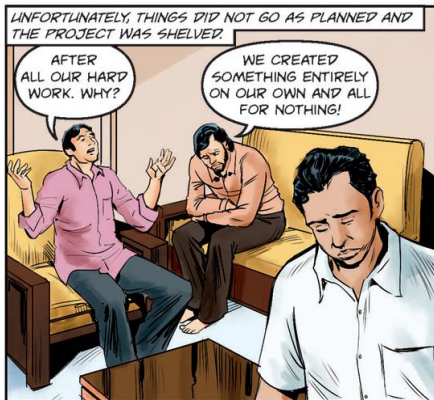


SOON THE HOVERCRAFT, NAMED NANDI*, WAS READY. THE DEFENCE MINISTER KRISHNA MENON CAME FOR A RIDE.



THAT WAS IMPRESSIVE! GO AHEAD AND MAKE MORE POWERFUL MACHINES. THIS IS THE BEGINNING. WE WILL SOON DEVELOP OUR OWN DEFENCE EQUIPMENT.

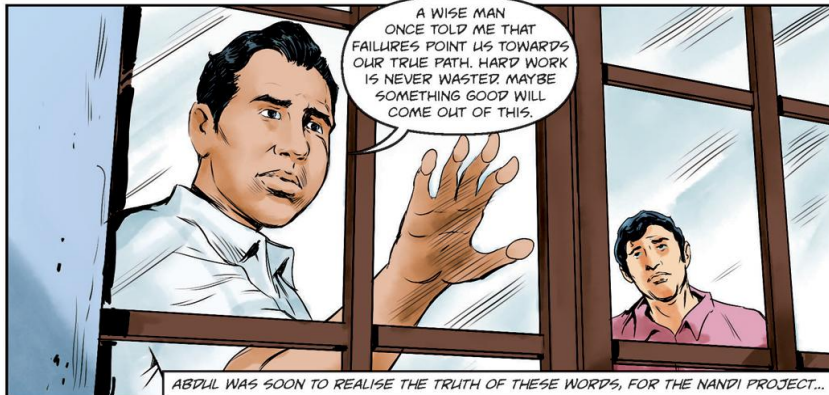
THANK YOU, SIR.



UNFORTUNATELY, THINGS DID NOT GO AS PLANNED AND THE PROJECT WAS SHELVED.

AFTER ALL OUR HARD WORK. WHY?

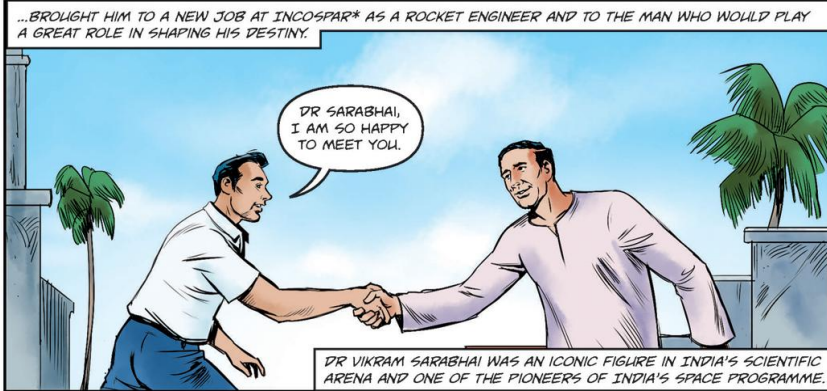
WE CREATED SOMETHING ENTIRELY ON OUR OWN AND ALL FOR NOTHING!



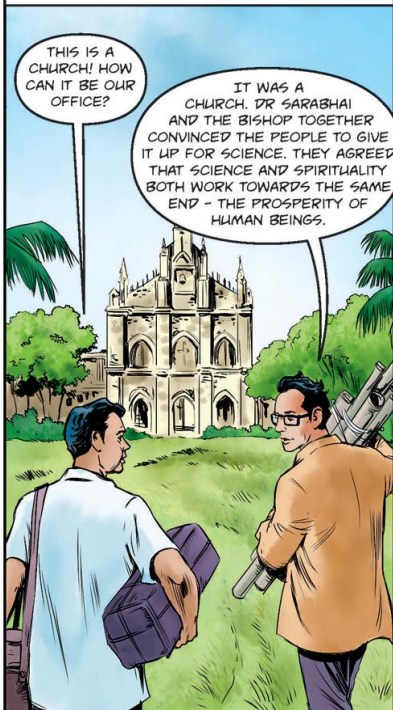
A WISE MAN ONCE TOLD ME THAT FAILURES POINT US TOWARDS OUR TRUE PATH. HARD WORK IS NEVER WASTED. MAYBE SOMETHING GOOD WILL COME OUT OF THIS.

ABDUL WAS SOON TO REALISE THE TRUTH OF THESE WORDS, FOR THE NANDI PROJECT...

*THE HOVERCRAFT WAS NAMED AFTER NANDI THE BULL, LORD SHIVA'S VEHICLE.



ABDUL'S FIRST PROJECT WAS AT THE EQUATORIAL ROCKET LAUNCHING STATION IN THUMBAA, A SMALL VILLAGE IN KERALA, CHOSEN BECAUSE IT WAS LOCATED ON THE EARTH'S MAGNETIC EQUATOR.



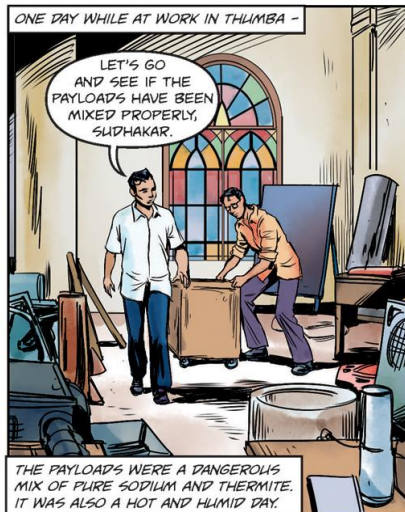
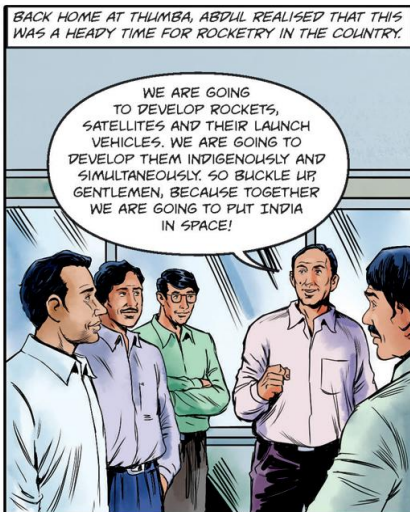
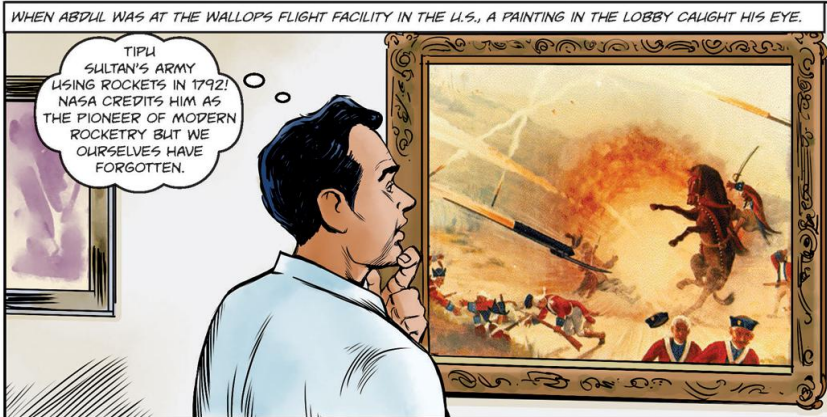
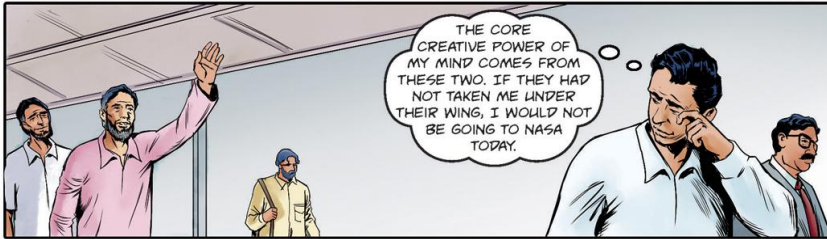
*INDIAN NATIONAL COMMITTEE FOR SPACE RESEARCH, LATER ISRO (INDIAN SPACE RESEARCH ORGANISATION)
**NOW MUMBAI



VERY SOON ABDUL WAS SENT TO THAT MECCA FOR ANY ROCKET SCIENTIST - NASA*. IT WAS THE FIRST TIME HE WAS TRAVELLING ABROAD AND BOTH JALAL AND SHAMSUDDIN CAME TO BOMBAY** TO SEE HIM OFF.



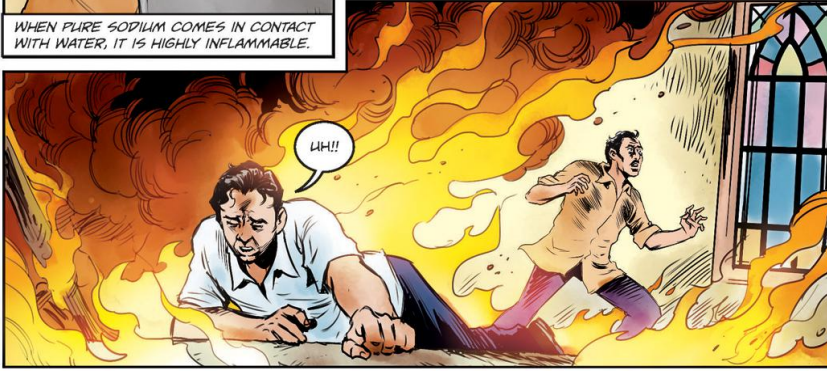
*NATIONAL AERONAUTICS AND SPACE ADMINISTRATION, USA

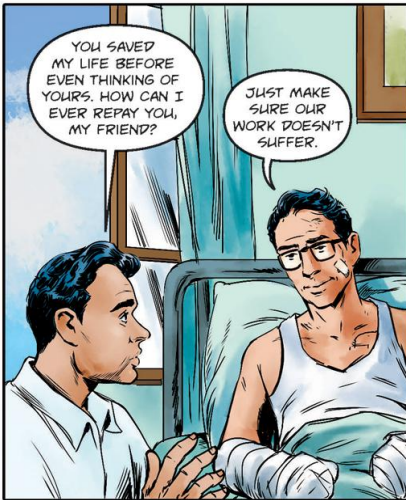


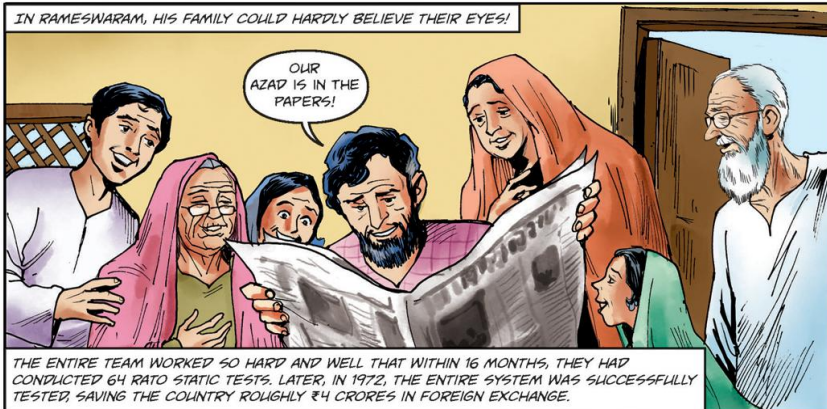
AS SUDHAKAR BENT OVER TO INSPECT THE MIXTURE, A SINGLE DROP OF SWEAT FROM HIS FOREHEAD FELL INTO IT.



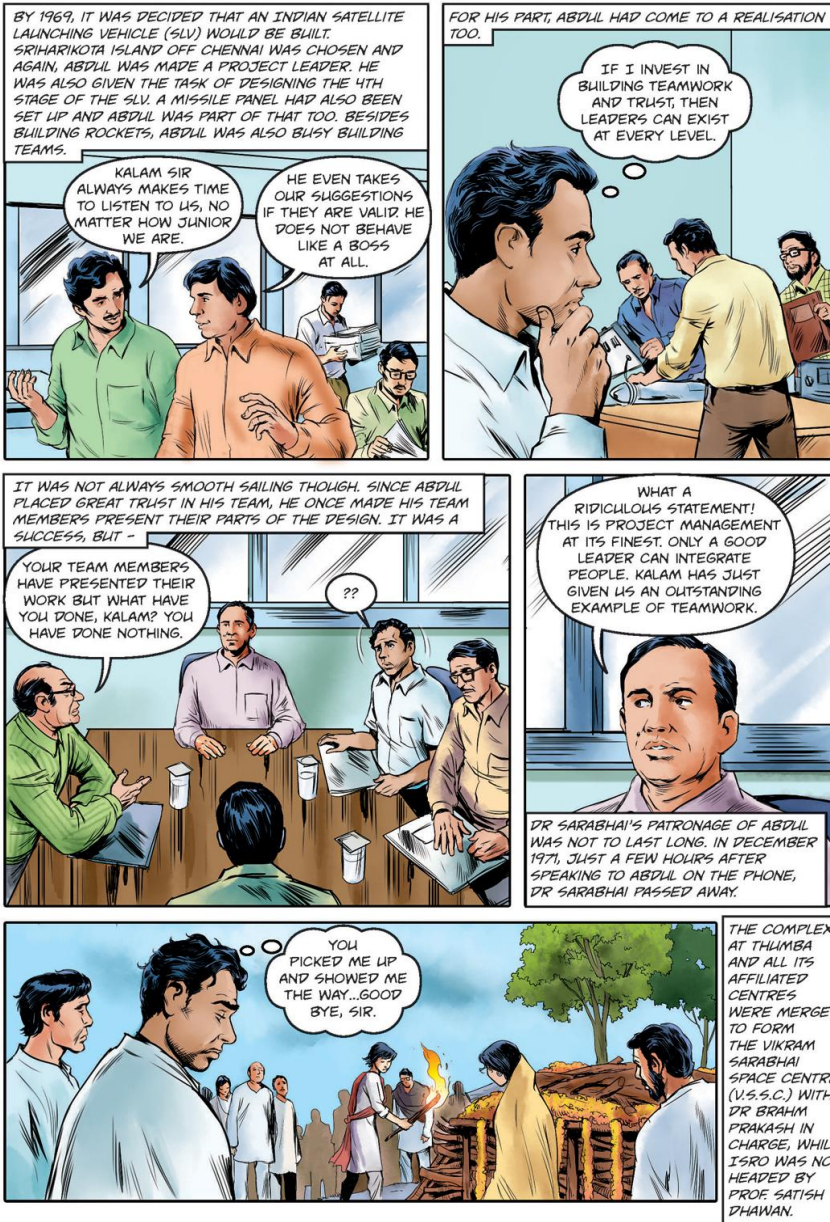
WHEN PURE SODIUM COMES IN CONTACT WITH WATER, IT IS HIGHLY INFLAMMABLE.

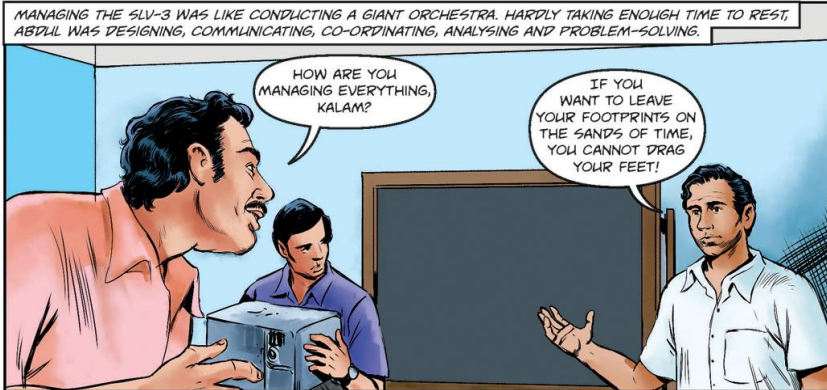
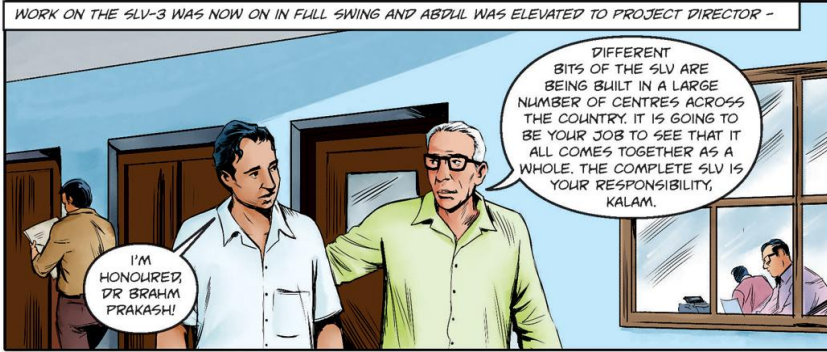


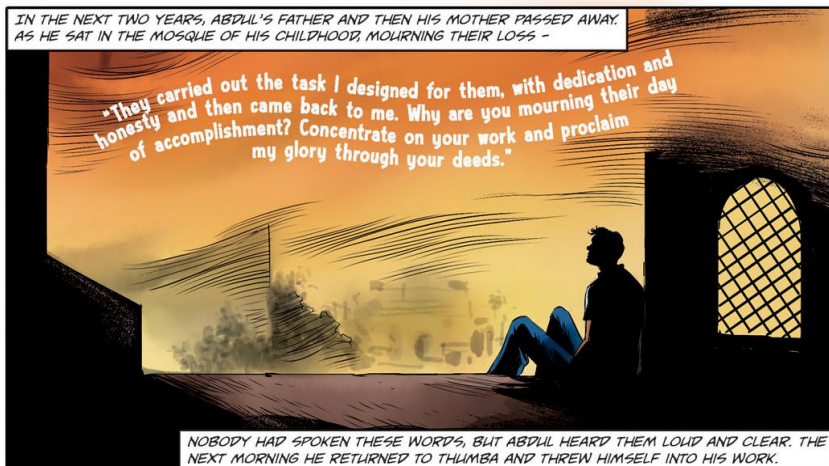
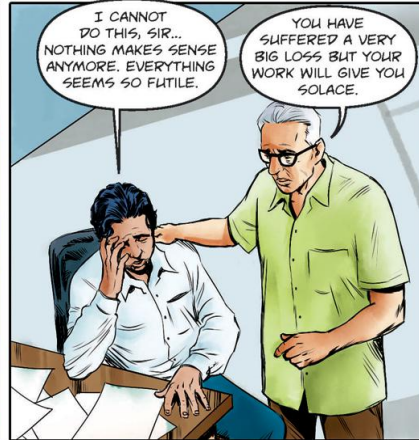
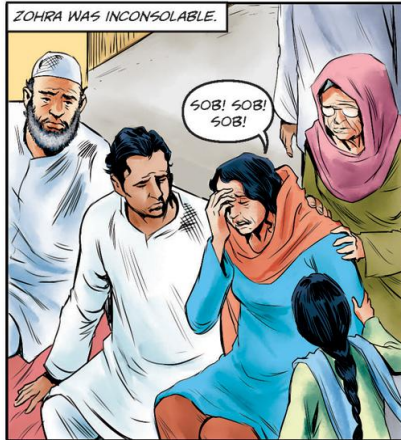




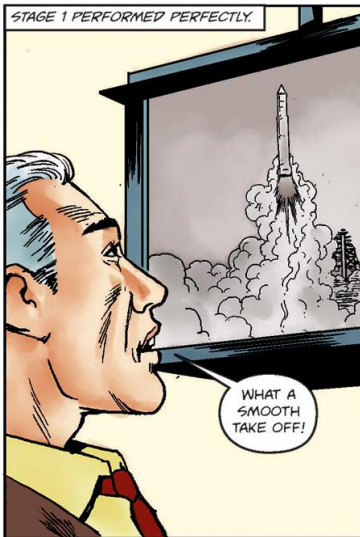
*ROCKET-ASSISTED TAKE-OFF SYSTEM. THIS WAS TO HELP MILITARY AIRCRAFT TAKE OFF FROM SHORT RUNWAYS ESPECIALLY IN DIFFICULT TERRAIN LIKE THE HIMALAYAS.

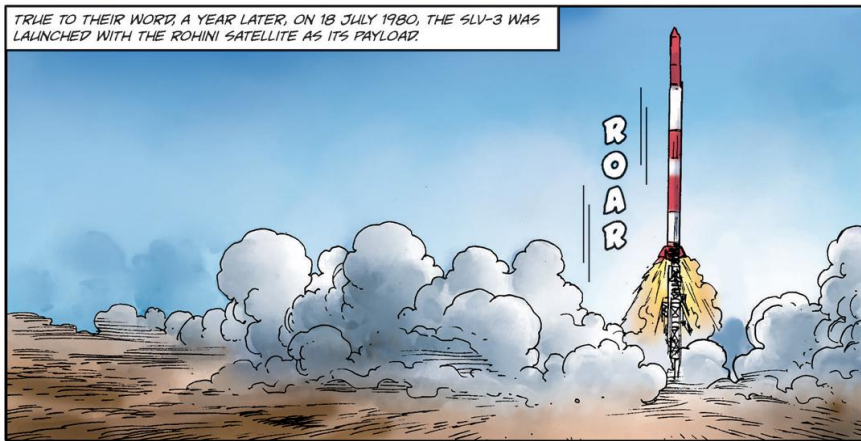
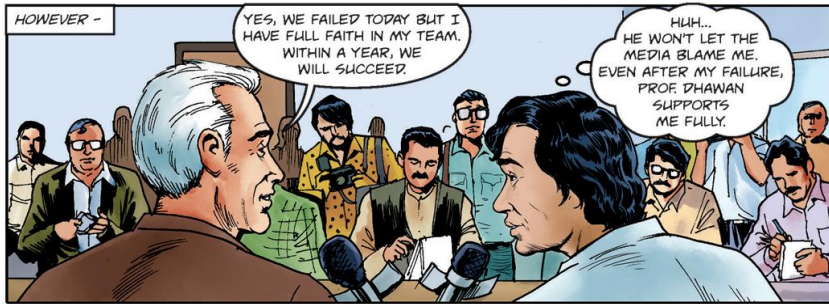
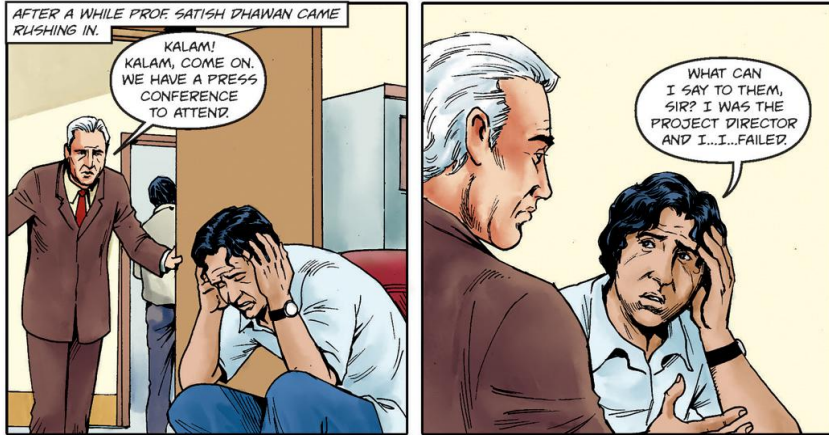


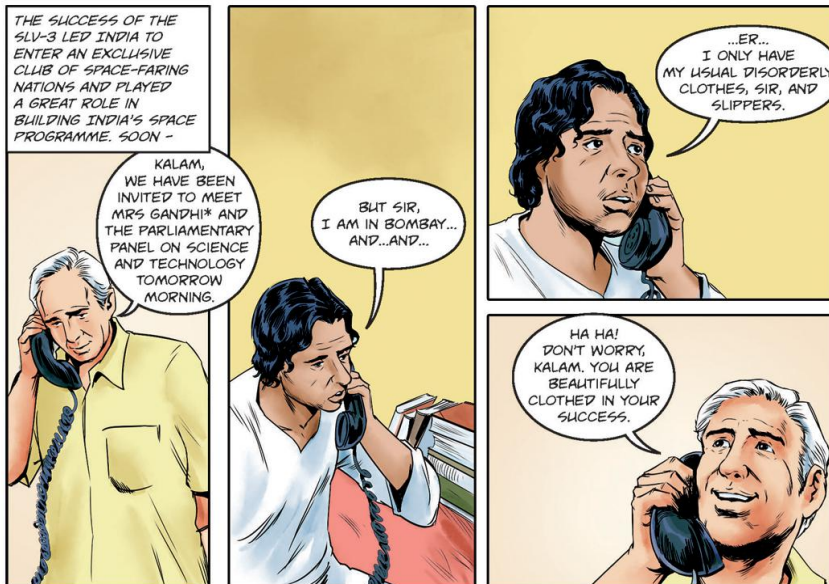
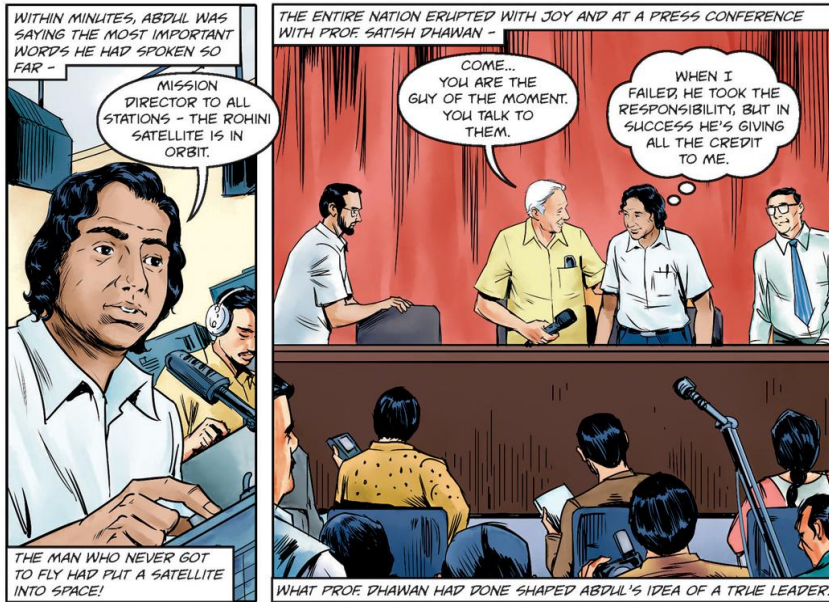




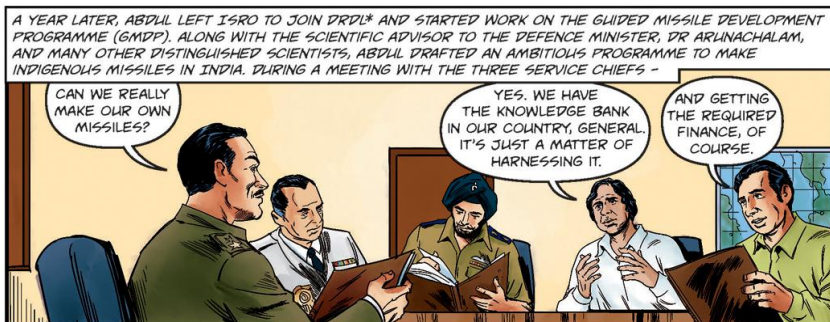
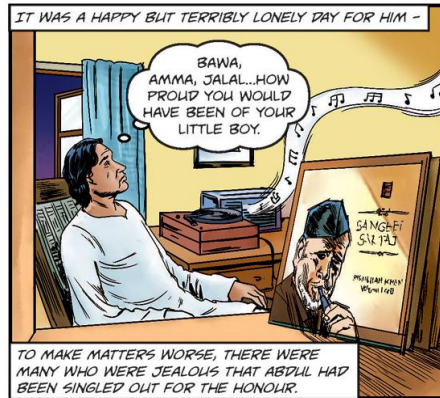
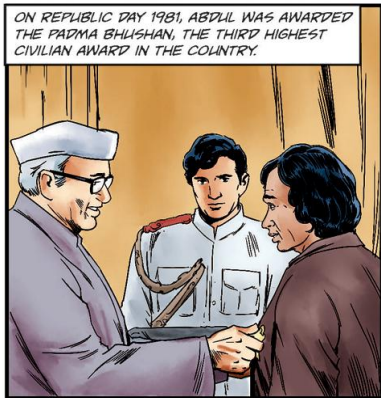
BY AUGUST 1979, THE SLV-3 WAS READY FOR ITS FIRST TRIAL. ABDUL AND HIS TEAMMATES HAD BEEN WORKING FEVERISHLY FOR DAYS. WITH THEM WERE DR BRAHM PRAKASH AND PROF. SATISH DHAWAN.



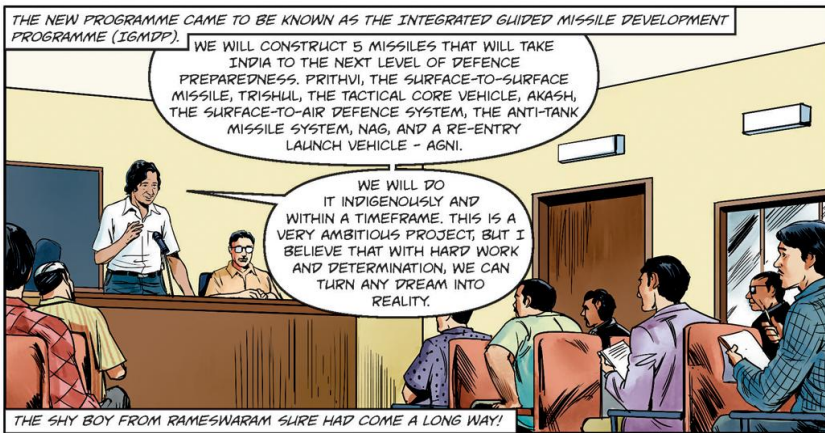
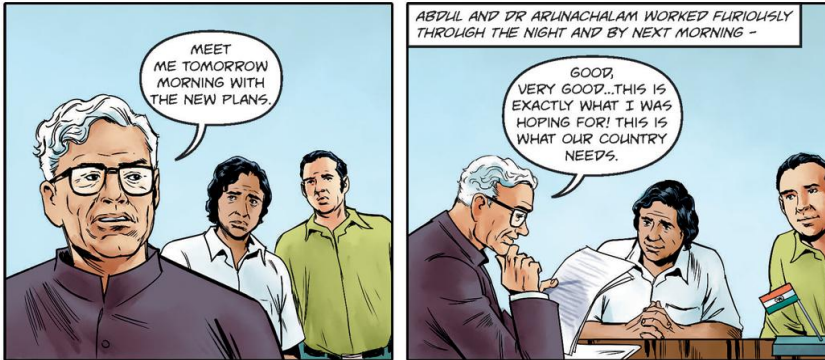
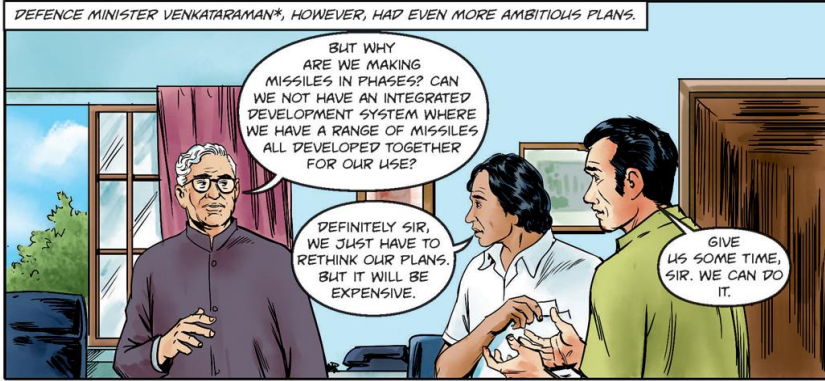




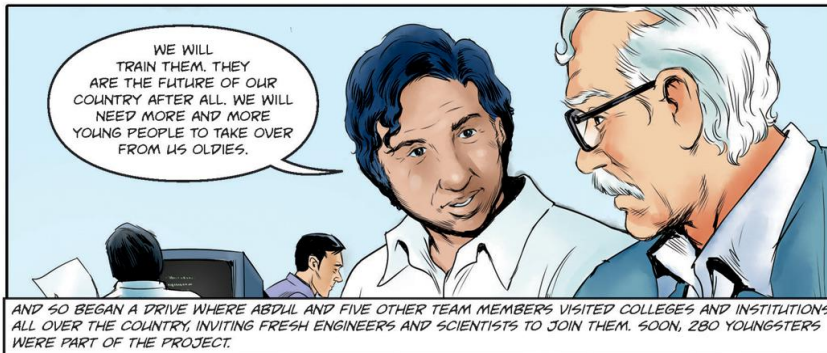
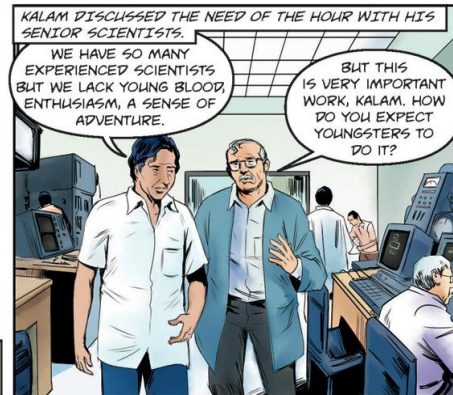
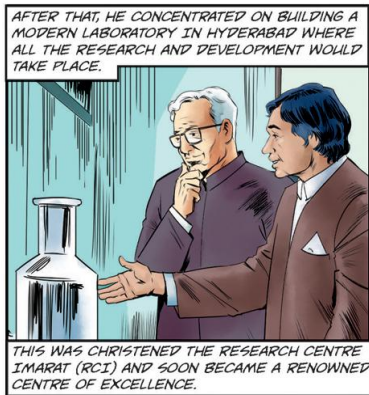
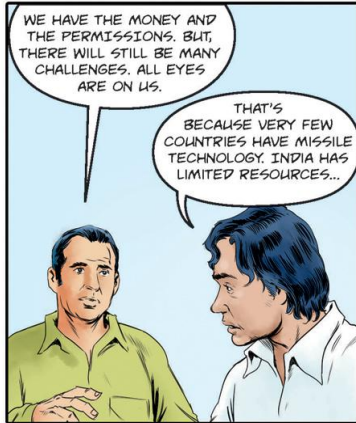
*INDIRA GANDHI, THEN PRIME MINISTER OF INDIA

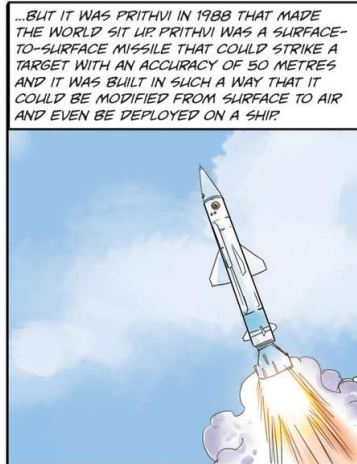
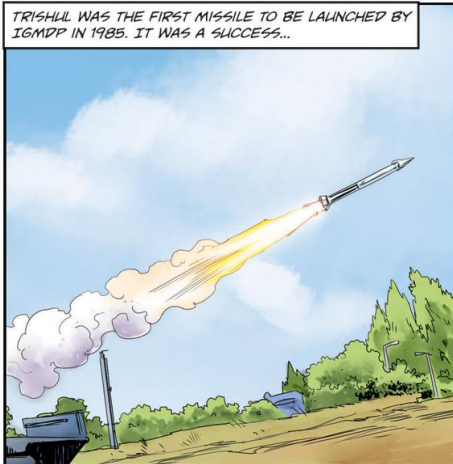
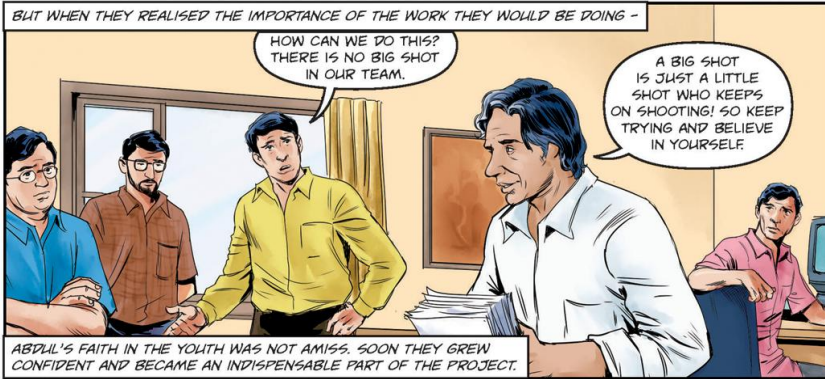


*DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT LABORATORY, THE MISSILE SYSTEM LABORATORY OF THE DRDO (DEFENCE RESEARCH AND DEVELOPMENT ORGANISATION)

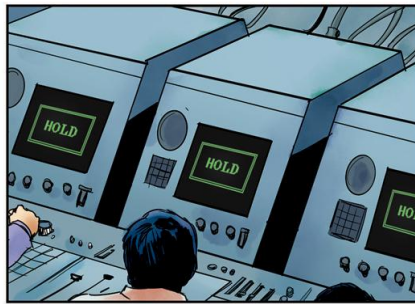
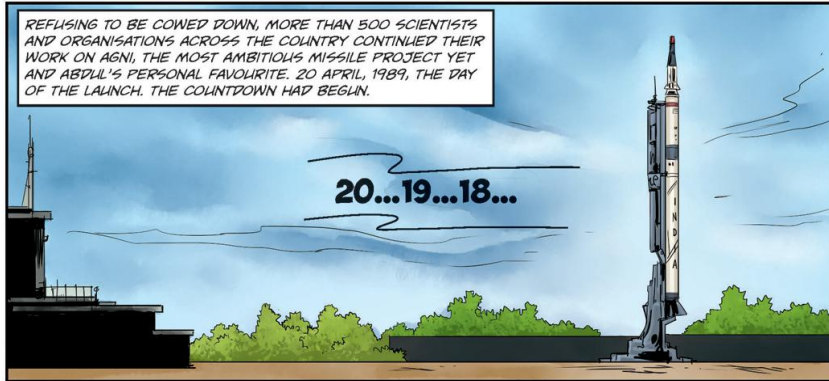


*LATER THE EIGHTH PRESIDENT OF INDIA





*OFFICIAL BAN



*T INDICATES THE TIME OF THE LAUNCH. SO T MINUS 14 SECONDS INDICATES 14 SECONDS BEFORE LAUNCH.

THE SCIENTISTS WERE DISHEARTENED AND ABDUL COULD FEEL THE EYES OF THE WORLD BORING INTO HIM.

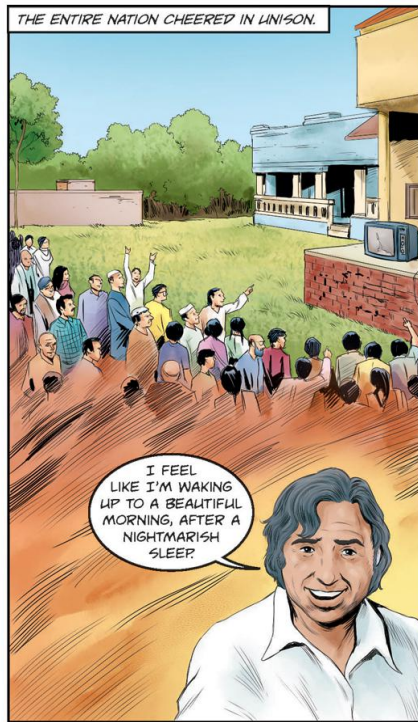
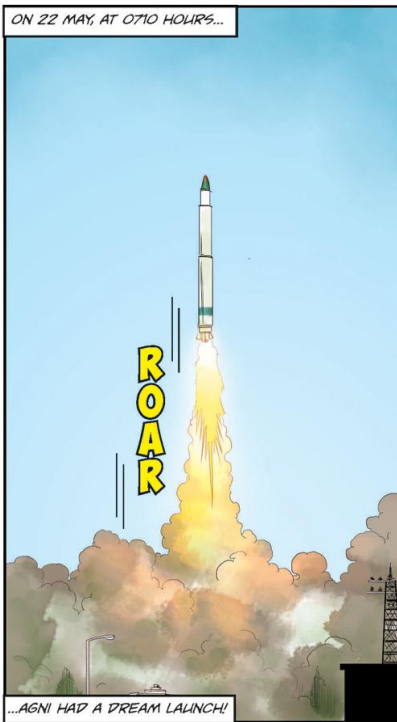


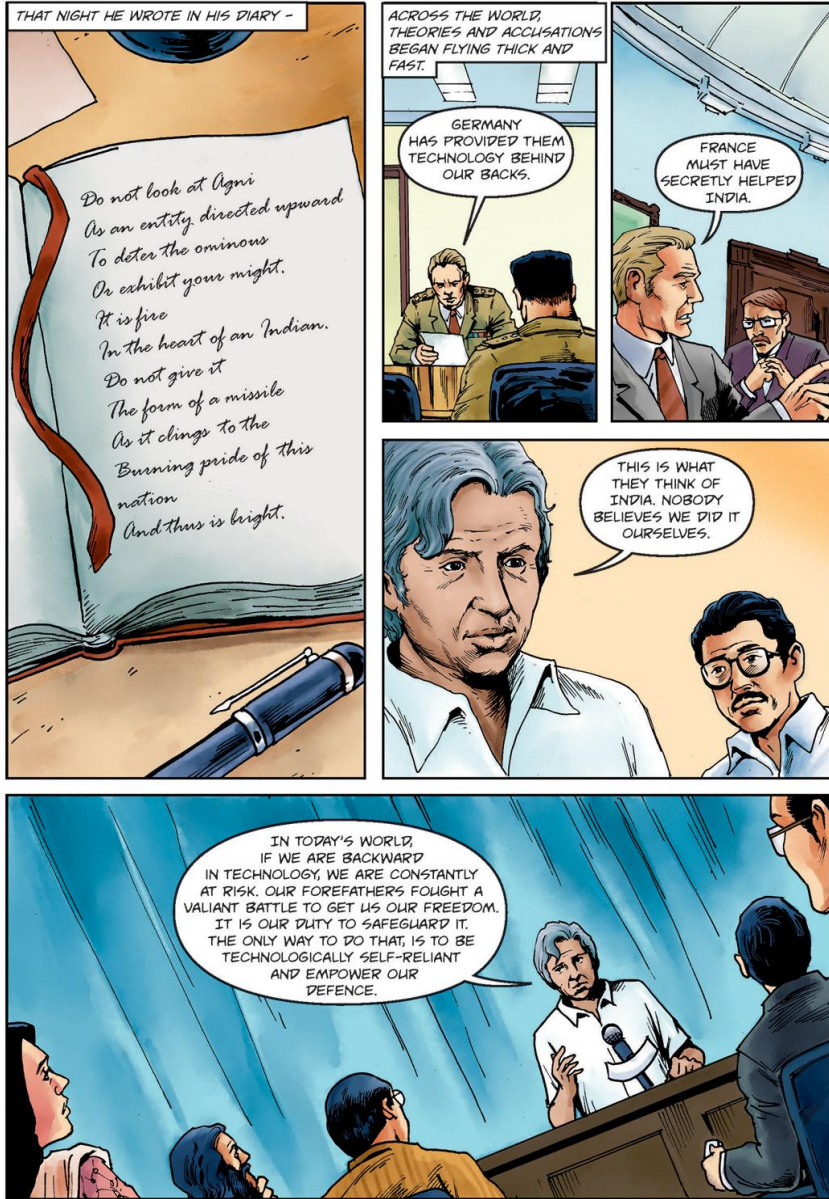
TEN DAYS LATER, AGNI WAS TO BE LAUNCHED AGAIN, BUT -



ABDUL AND THE TEAM BECAME THE LAUGHING STOCK OF THE NATION.







A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM

REPUBLIC DAY, 1990, BROUGHT WITH IT THE NEWS THAT ABDUL AND DR ARUNACHALAM HAD BOTH BEEN DECORATED WITH THE PADMA VIBHUSHAN. TWO OTHER COLLEAGUES WERE AWARDED THE PADMA SHRI. IT WAS INDEED A GOOD DAY FOR THE IISMDP.



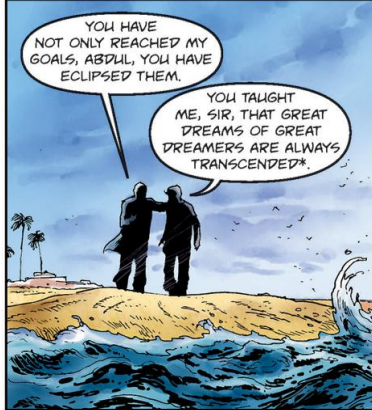
ALL THIS RECOGNITION AND HONOUR COULD NOT CHANGE ABDUL. HE HAD LEARNED TO MAKE HIS VOICE HEARD BUT AT HEART, HE WAS STILL THE SIMPLE ISLAND BOY.



KALAM, YOU ARE A FAMOUS AND DECORATED SCIENTIST. WHY DO YOU STILL LIVE IN ONE ROOM?

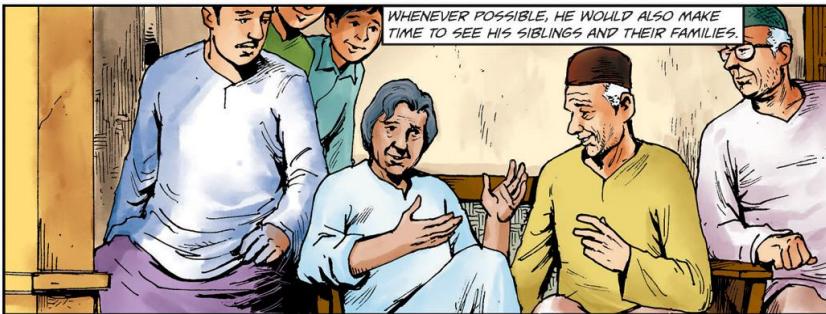
EVERYTHING THAT I OWN FITS HERE. I DON'T NEED MORE.

A FEW WEEKS LATER, ABDUL WENT TO MADURAI TO FIND HIS OLD TEACHER REVEREND SOLOMON WHO HAD SHOWN HIM THE POWER OF DREAMS.



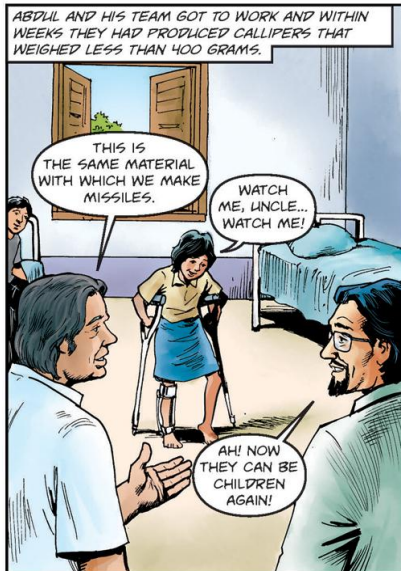
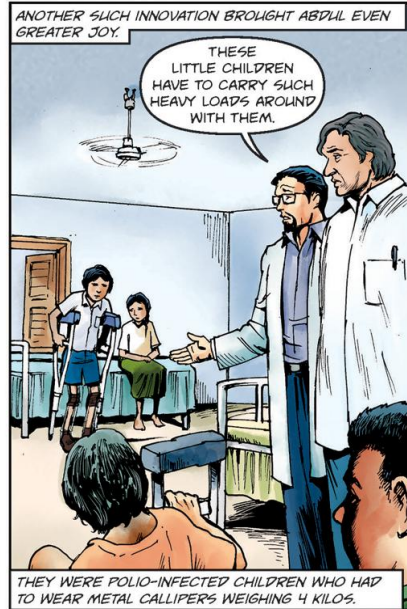
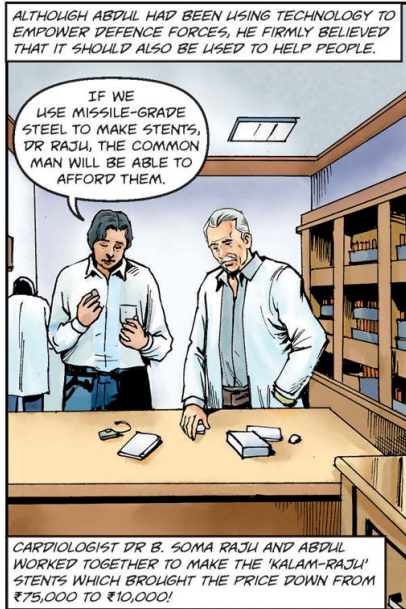
YOU HAVE NOT ONLY REACHED MY GOALS, ABDUL, YOU HAVE ECLIPSED THEM.

YOU TAUGHT ME, SIR, THAT GREAT DREAMS OF GREAT DREAMERS ARE ALWAYS TRANSCENDED*.



WHENEVER POSSIBLE, HE WOULD ALSO MAKE TIME TO SEE HIS SIBLINGS AND THEIR FAMILIES.

*TAKEN FORWARD



1998 MARKED AN IMPORTANT YEAR FOR OUR COUNTRY. ATAL BIHARI VAJPAYEE WAS THE PRIME MINISTER AND HE HAD A TOP SECRET MISSION FOR ABDUL -



THE TESTS WERE TO BE CONDUCTED IN POKHRAN IN RAJASTHAN. SINCE IT WAS AN ARMY RANGE, ALL THE SCIENTISTS INVOLVED WERE GIVEN ARMY IDENTITIES AND UNIFORMS.



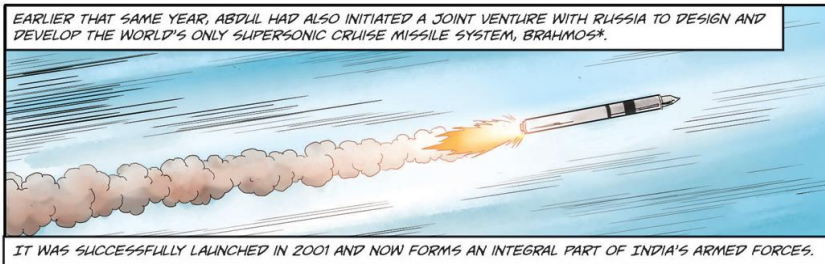
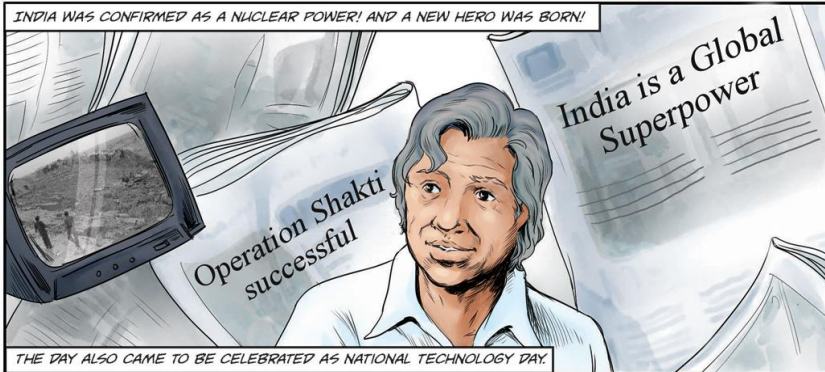
PREPARATIONS FOR THE UNDERGROUND TESTS WERE DONE IN ABSOLUTE SECRECY IN THE DEAD OF THE NIGHT.



ON 11 MAY, 1998, THREE NUCLEAR DEVICES WERE DETONATED. THE TEST WAS A COMPLETE SUCCESS!

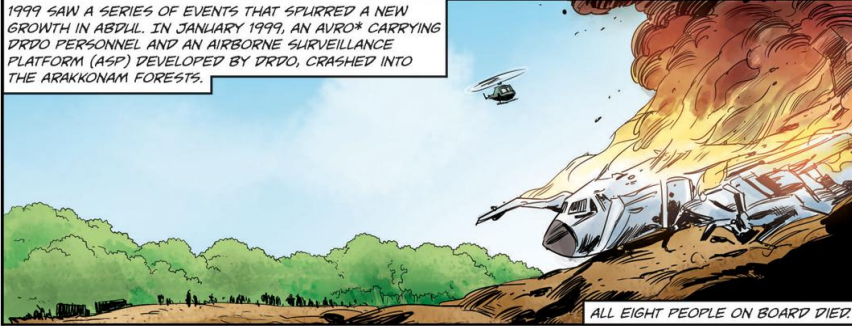


*THE FIRST NUCLEAR TEST WAS CONDUCTED ON 18 MAY, 1974, WHEN INDIRA GANDHI WAS THE PRIME MINISTER.



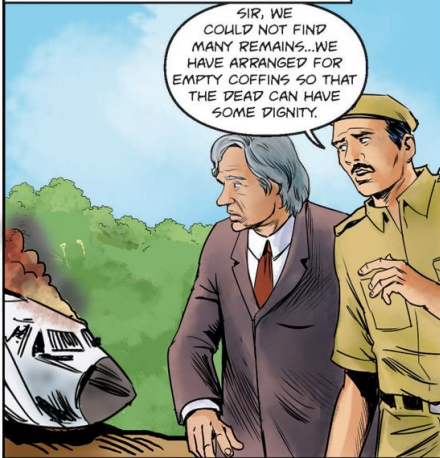
*NAMED AFTER THE RIVERS BRAHMAPUTRA IN INDIA AND MOSKVA IN RUSSIA

1999 SAW A SERIES OF EVENTS THAT SPURRED A NEW GROWTH IN ABDUL. IN JANUARY 1999, AN AVRO* CARRYING DRDO PERSONNEL AND AN AIRBORNE SURVEILLANCE PLATFORM (ASP) DEVELOPED BY DRDO, CRASHED INTO THE ARAKKONAM FORESTS.



ALL EIGHT PEOPLE ON BOARD DIED.

AS HEAD OF DRDO, ABDUL RUSHED TO THE SITE. WHAT HE SAW THERE, DEVASTATED HIM.



SIR, WE COULD NOT FIND MANY REMAINS...WE HAVE ARRANGED FOR EMPTY COFFINS SO THAT THE DEAD CAN HAVE SOME DIGNITY.

BACK IN DELHI, HE MET THE BEREAVED FAMILIES.



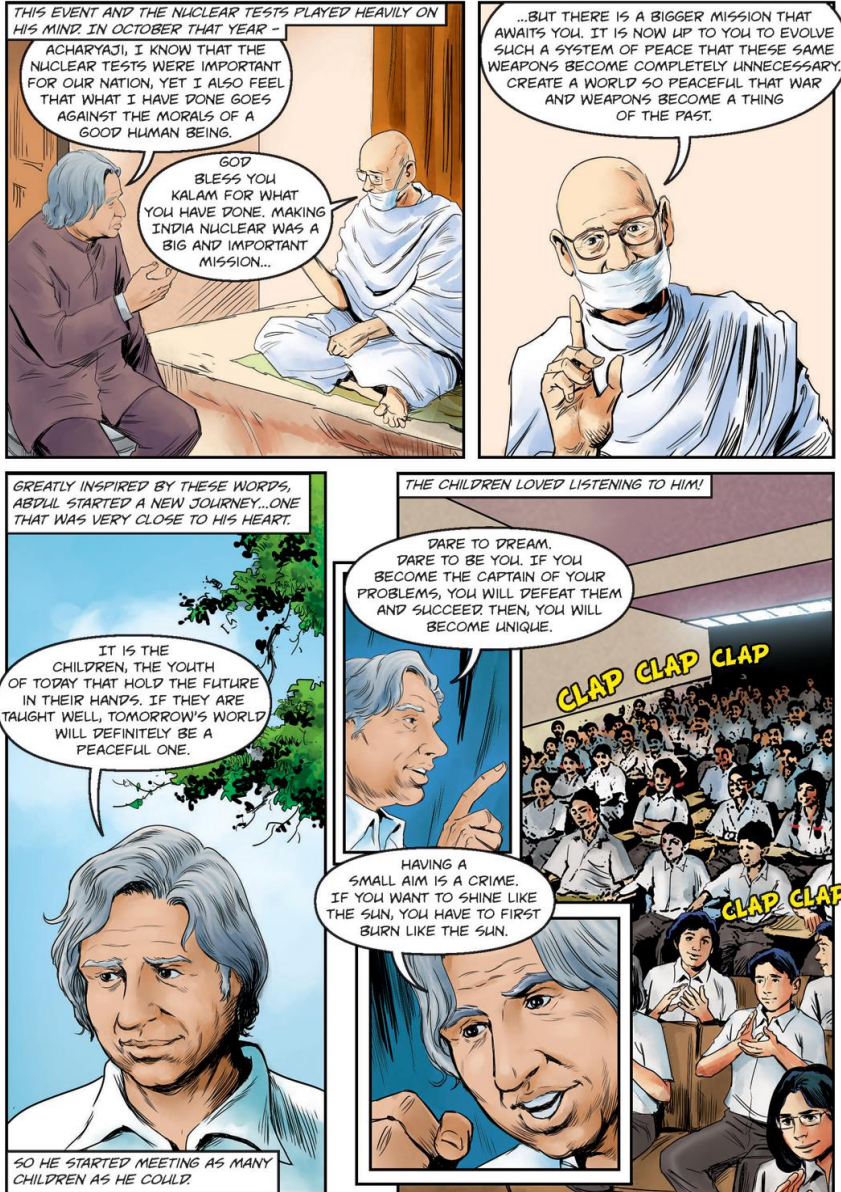
WHY DID YOU DO THIS? WHO WILL TAKE CARE OF HIM NOW?

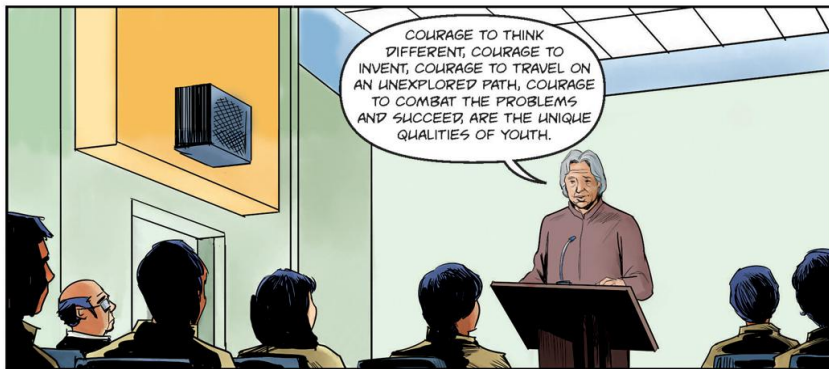
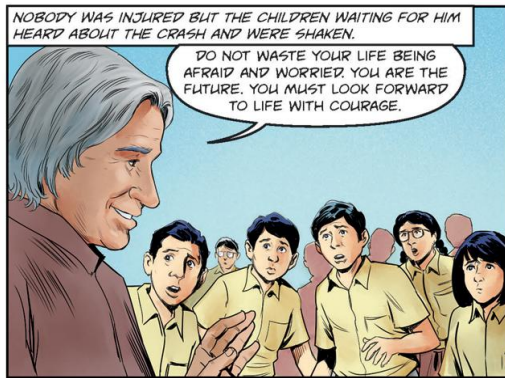
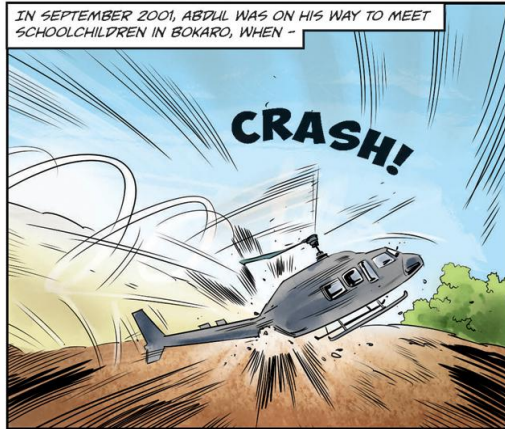
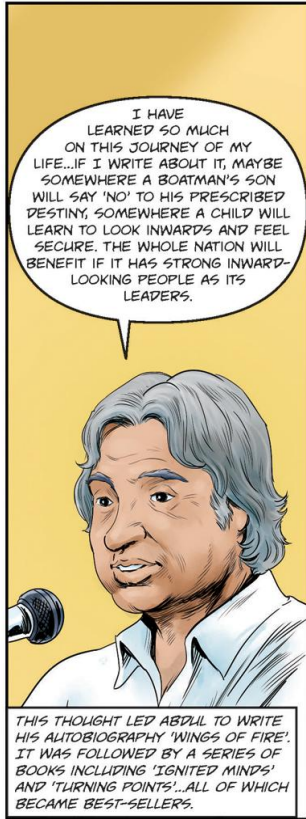
OH...MY GOD!

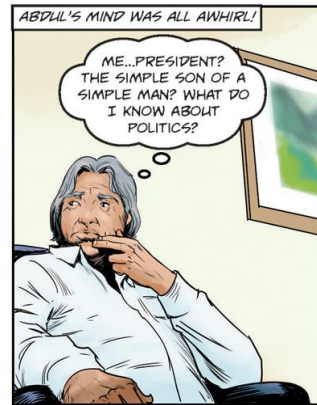
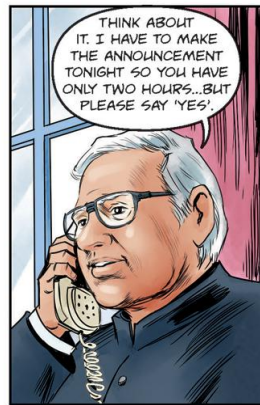
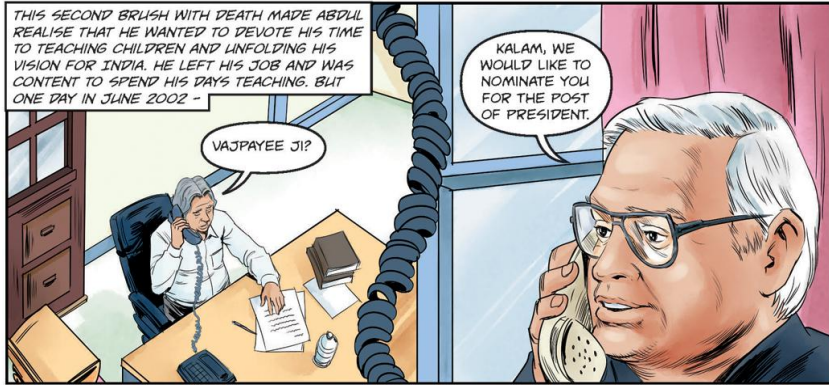


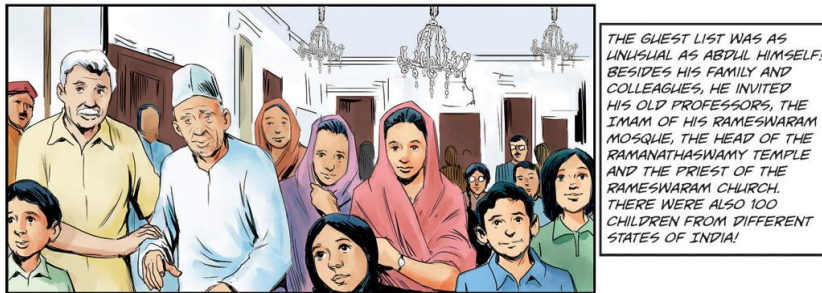
THIS IS THE NATURE OF SCIENCE. DANGERS LURK AT EVERY STEP...AND COMPLEX MISSIONS HAVE A LONG, HARD JOURNEY. THE SACRIFICES AND THE BRAVERY OF THESE MEN SHOULD NOT GO IN VAIN.

*A SMALL AIRCRAFT

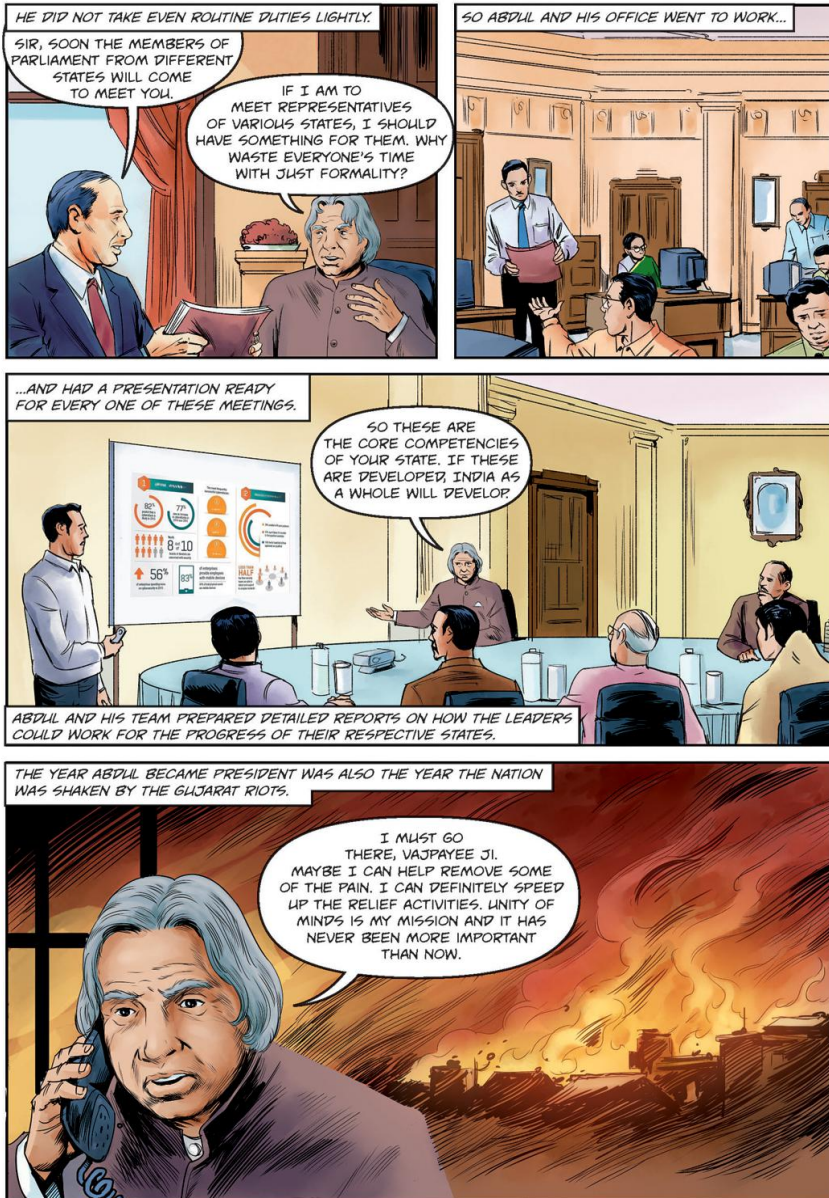


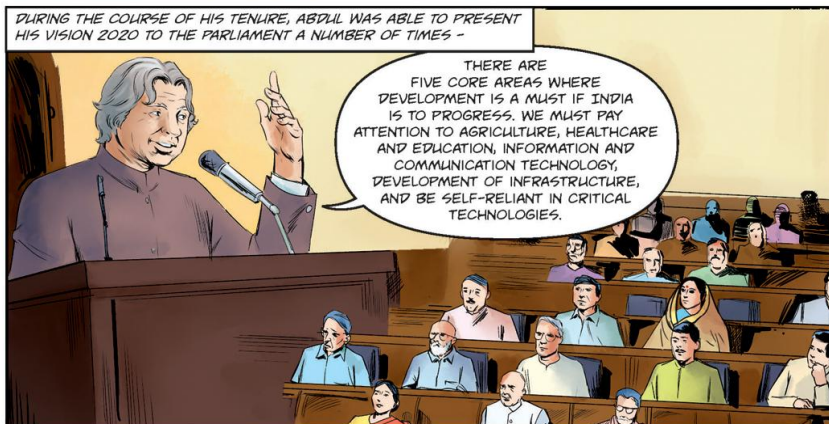
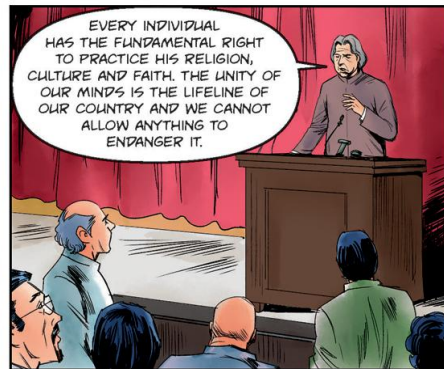
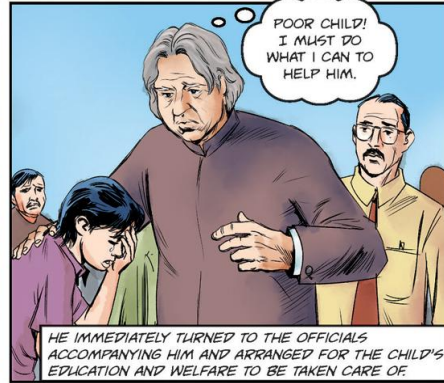


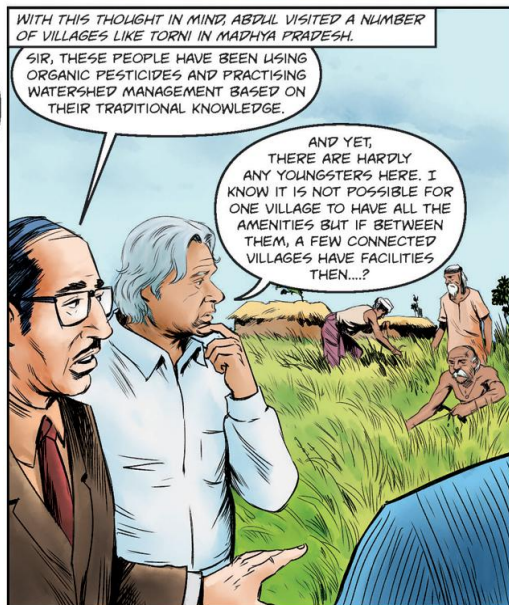
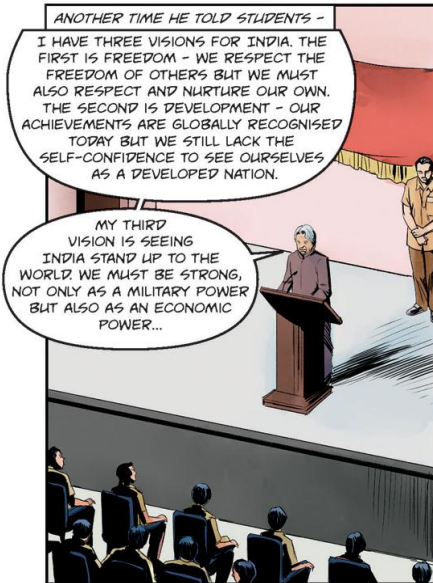










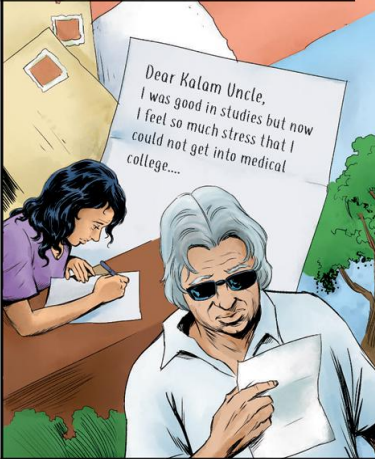


AND SO WAS BORN THE IDEA OF HAVING P.L.R.A. VILLAGE CLUSTERS - INSTITUTIONS, HOSPITALS AND EMPLOYMENT OPPORTUNITIES SPREAD ACROSS A GROUP OF VILLAGES WELL CONNECTED BY ROAD - SO THAT LIFE IN THE VILLAGES WOULD BE PROSPEROUS AND HEALTHY.



ABDUL WAS SO HAPPY WITH THIS THOUGHT THAT HE DONATED HIS LIFE'S SAVINGS TO THE PROJECT.

FOR THE YOUNG, HE HAD BECOME AN ICON, A MENTOR AND THE GO-TO PERSON WHEN THEY WERE IN TROUBLE OR DOUBT.



FOREIGN MEDIA COMMENTED ON HIS 'ROCKSTAR' LIKE BUZZ AND HE WAS EVEN NOMINATED TWICE FOR MTV'S YOUTH ICON OF THE YEAR AWARD. IT DID NOT MATTER THAT HE WAS THEN MORE THAN 73 YEARS OLD!

BY NOW, PEOPLE HAD REALISED THAT THEIR 'MISSILE MAN' WAS ALSO A VERY CARING PERSON. EVERYWHERE HE WENT, HE WAS GREETED BY HORDES OF INDIANS WHO SOMETIMES WAITED ALL DAY TO GET A GLIMPSE OF HIM.



ABDUL TURNED OUT TO BE POPULAR AND EFFECTIVE EVEN IN HIS STATE VISITS TO OTHER COUNTRIES.

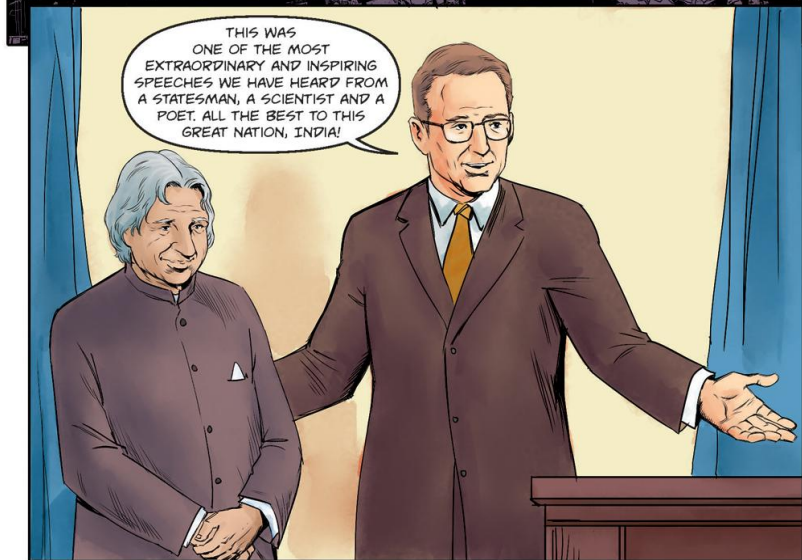
IN SWITZERLAND -



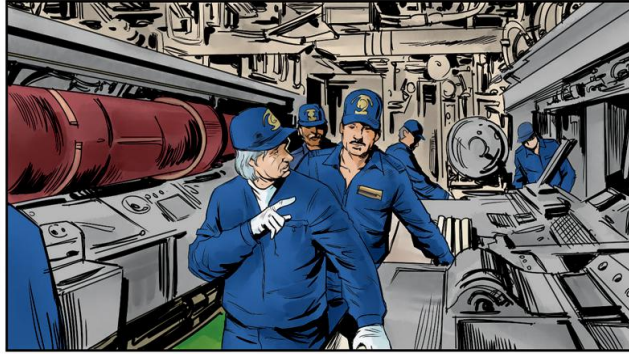
IN SOUTH AFRICA -

I GIVE TO YOU THE PAN AFRICAN E-NETWORK THAT WILL CONNECT INDIA AND THE 53-MEMBER NATIONS OF THIS GREAT CONTINENT TO EACH OTHER, AND PROVIDE EDUCATION, HEALTHCARE AND E-GOVERNANCE SERVICES.





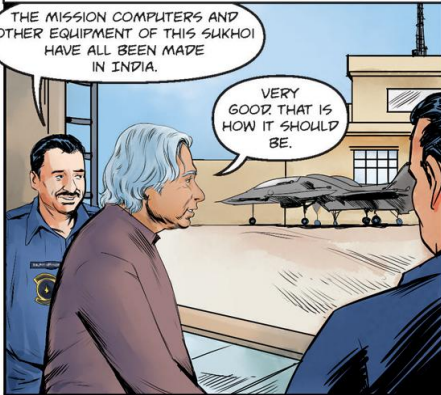
AS PRESIDENT, ABDUL WAS ALSO THE SUPREME COMMANDER OF THE ARMED FORCES. HE MADE IT A POINT TO VISIT HIS MEN POSTED IN DIFFICULT TERRAINS. HE VISITED THE KUMAR POST ON SIACHEN GLACIER AND RODE IN THE NAVAL SUBMARINE, INS SINDHURAKSHAK.



BUT HIS MOST CHERISHED MOMENT CAME IN JUNE 2006, WHEN HE VISITED AN AIR FORCE BASE IN PUNE.

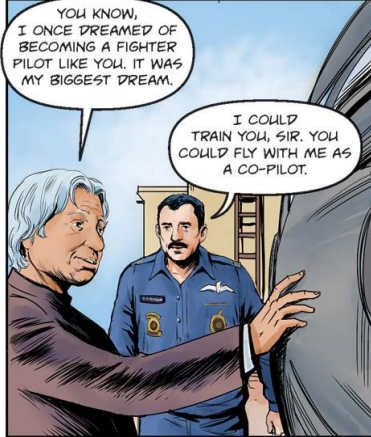
THE MISSION COMPUTERS AND OTHER EQUIPMENT OF THIS SUKHOI HAVE ALL BEEN MADE IN INDIA.

VERY GOOD THAT IS HOW IT SHOULD BE.



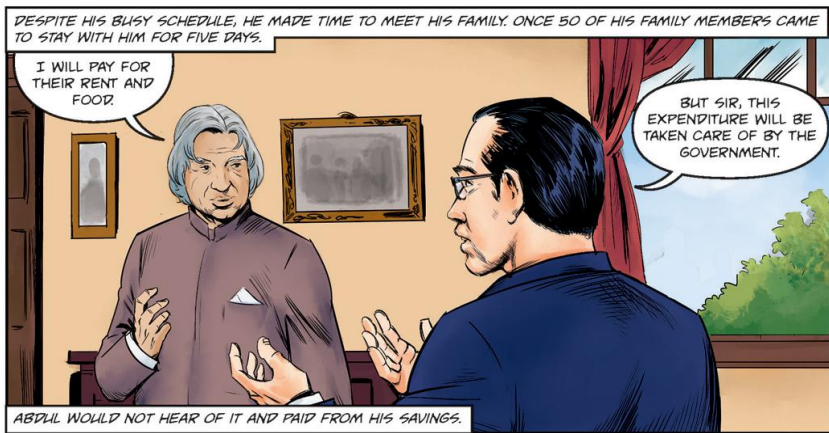
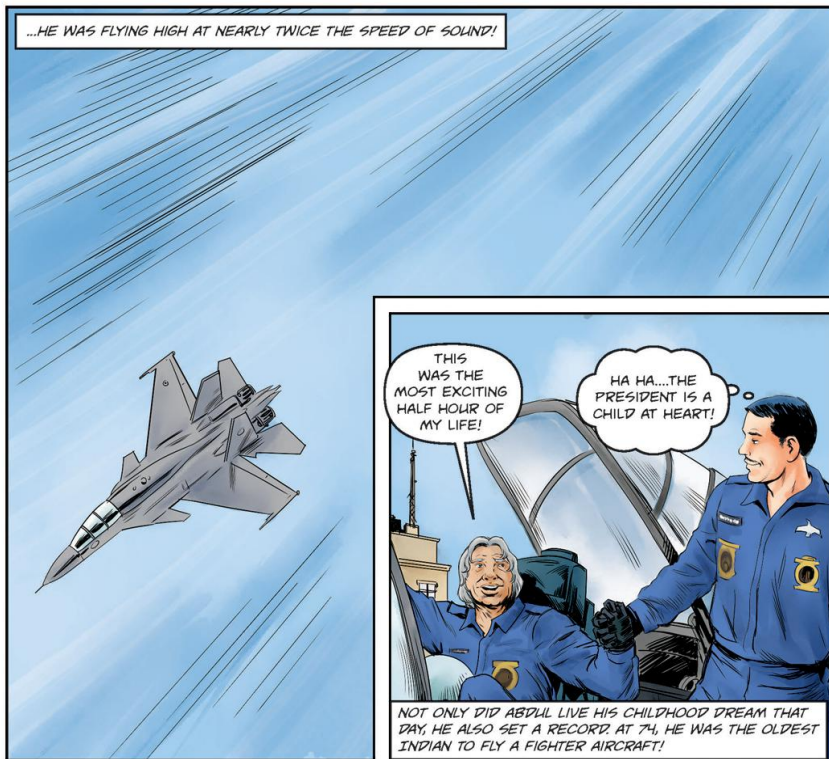
YOU KNOW, I ONCE DREAMED OF BECOMING A FIGHTER PILOT LIKE YOU. IT WAS MY BIGGEST DREAM.

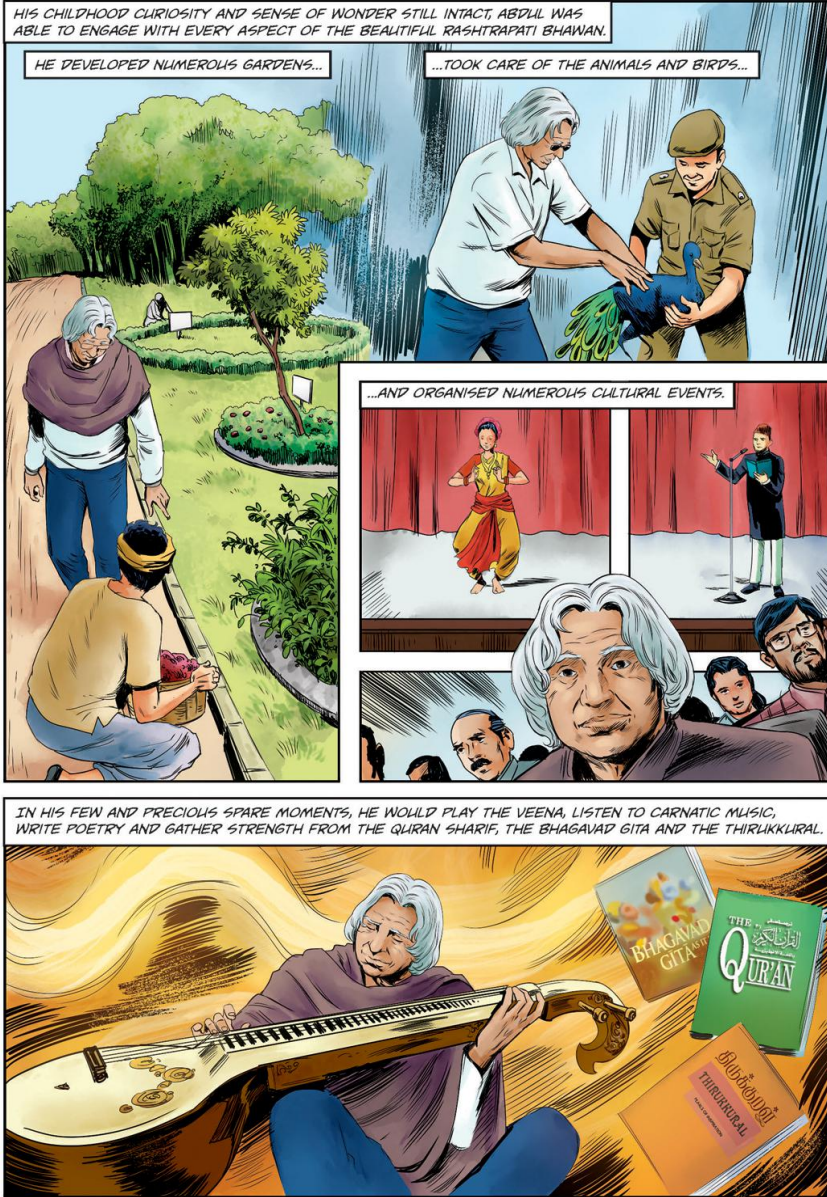
I COULD TRAIN YOU, SIR. YOU COULD FLY WITH ME AS A CO-PILOT.

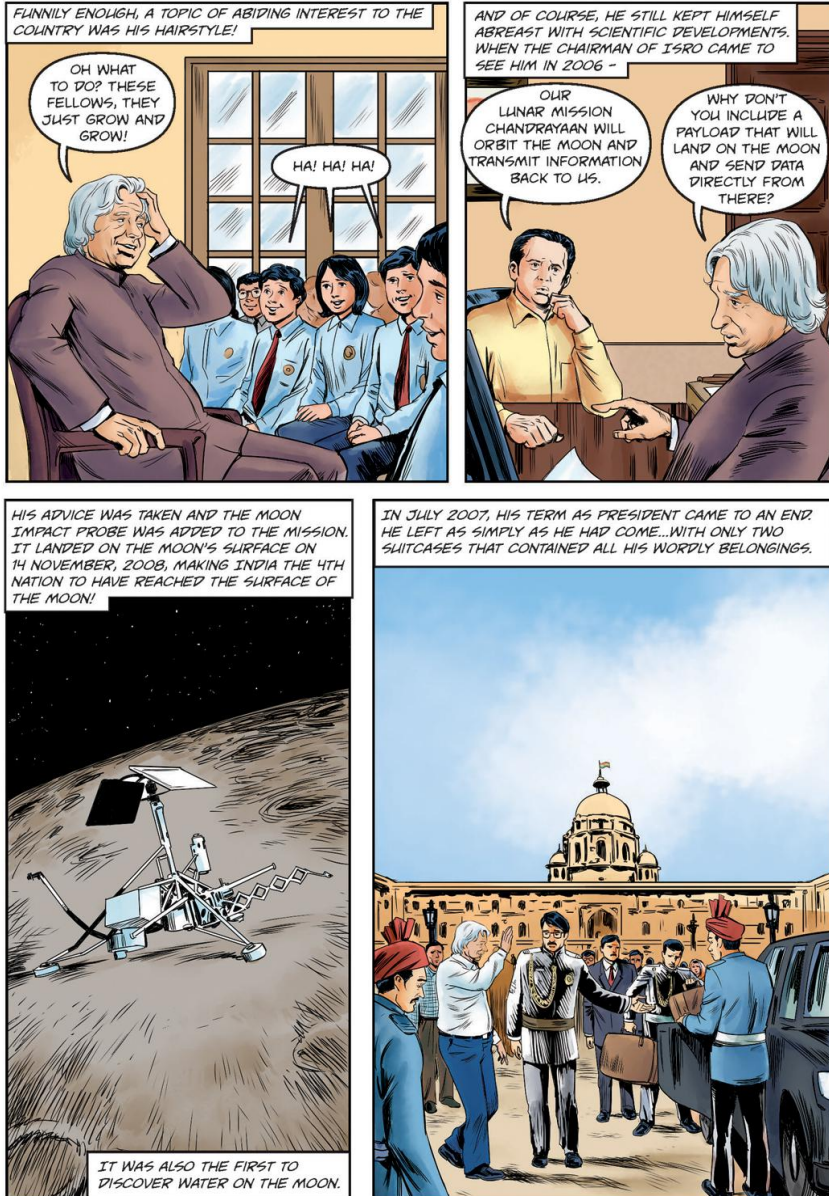


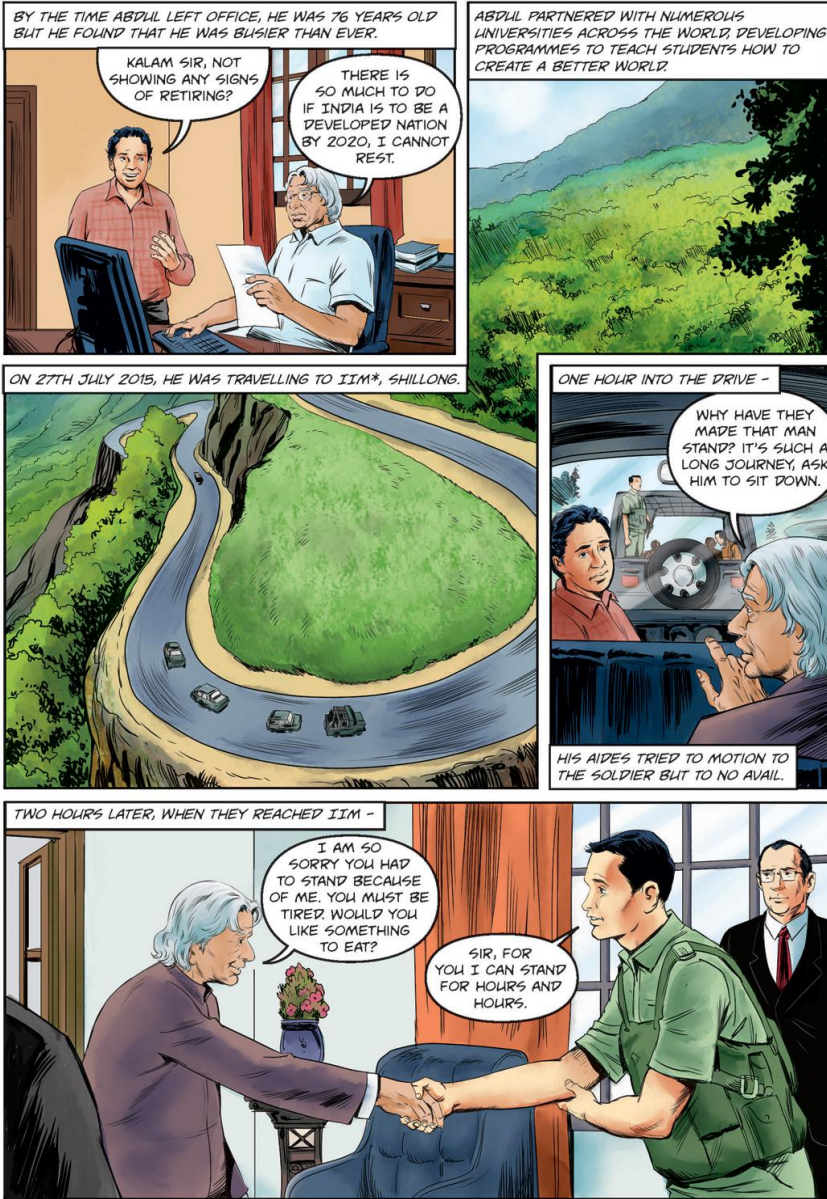
NEVER ONE TO REFUSE A CHALLENGE, ABDUL UNDERTOOK THE TRAINING AND THE NEXT DAY...



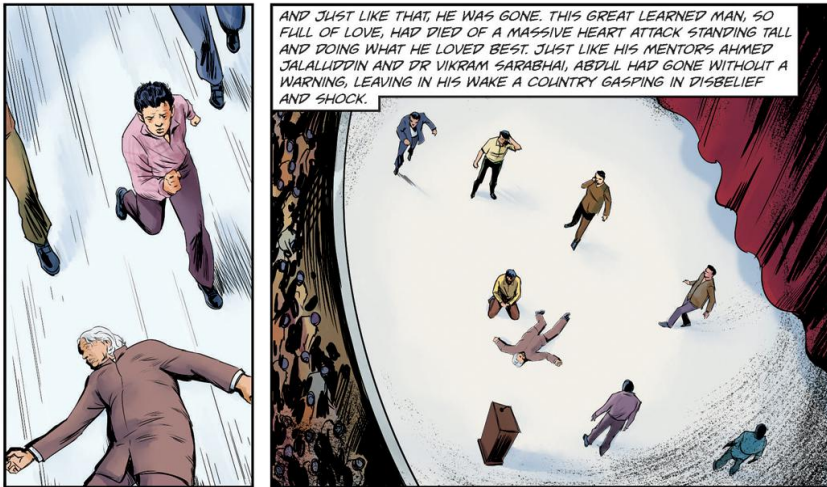
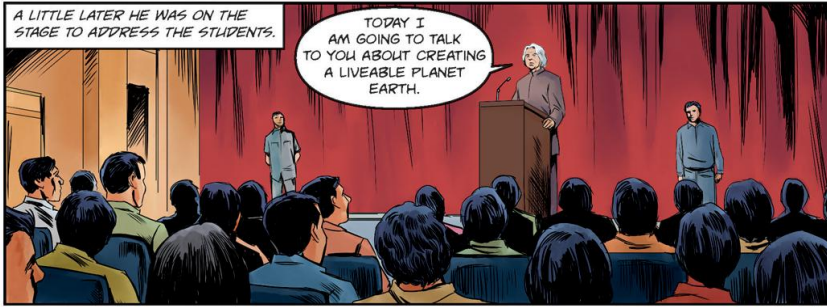


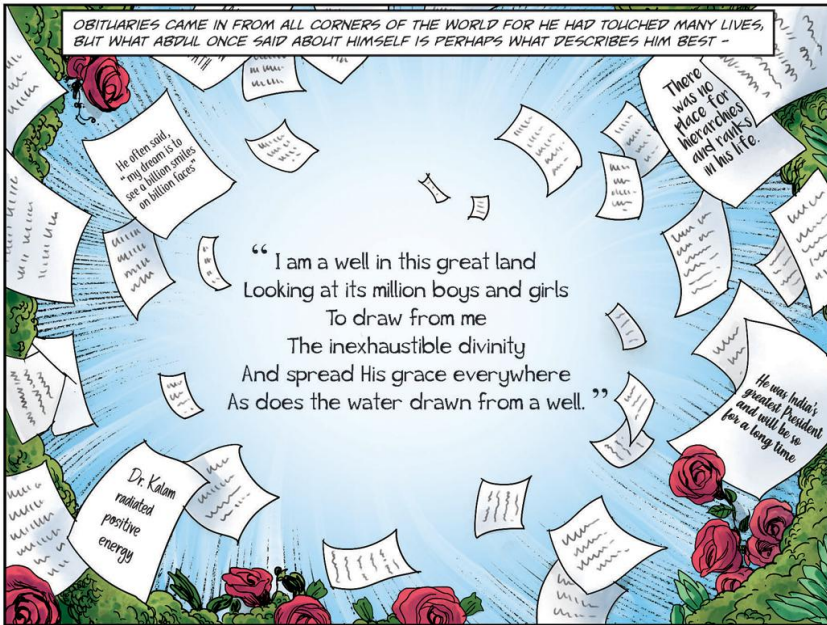
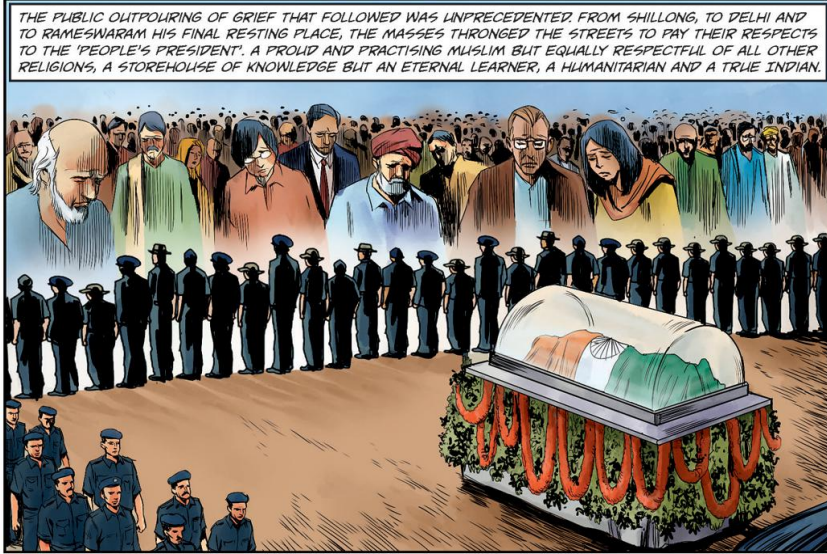






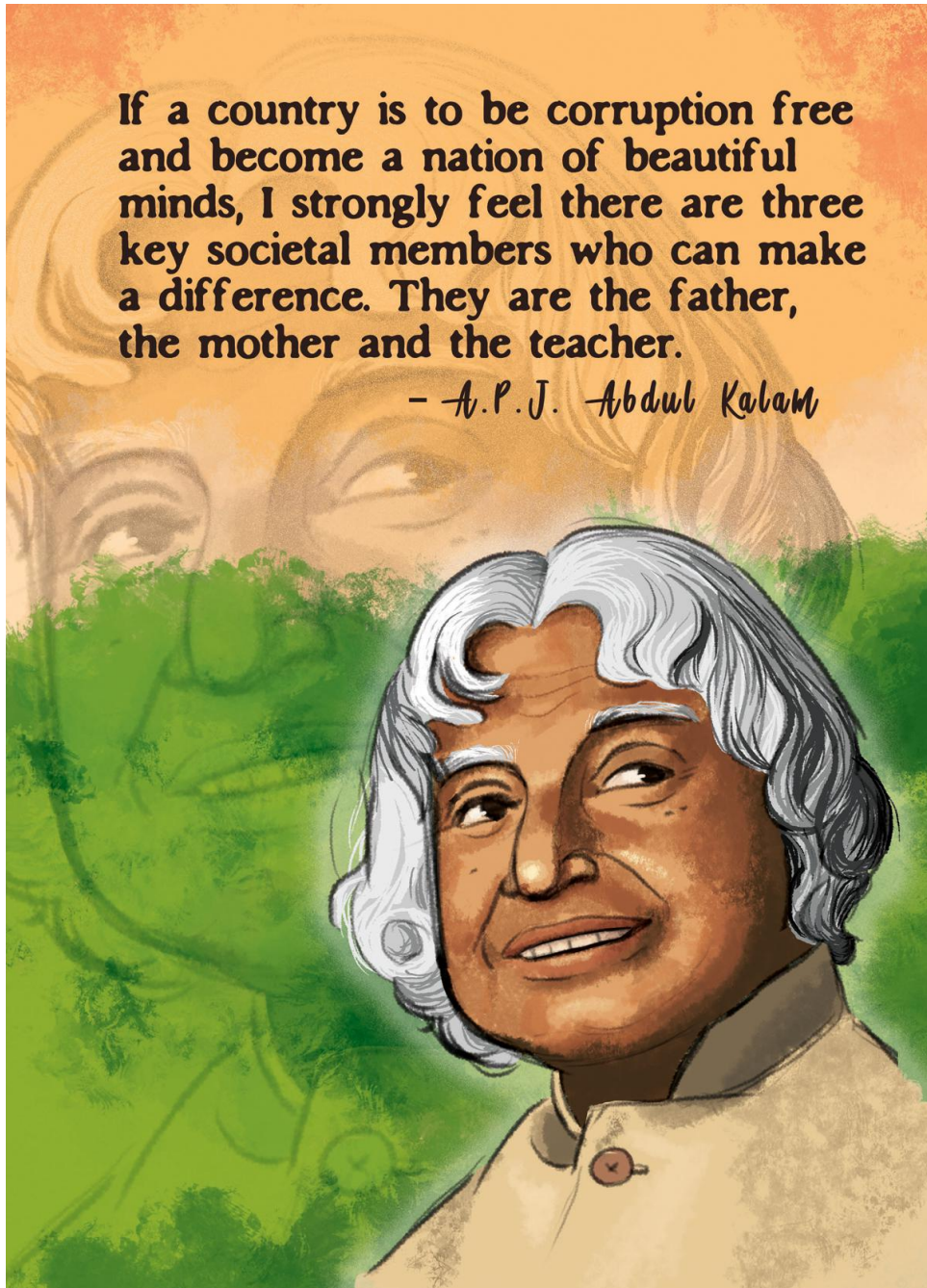
*INDIAN INSTITUTE OF MANAGEMENT





If a country is to be corruption free and become a nation of beautiful minds, I strongly feel there are three key societal members who can make a difference. They are the father, the mother and the teacher.

- A.P.J. Abdul Kalam



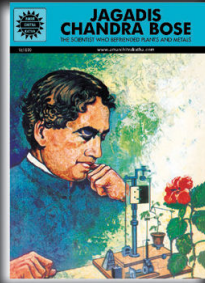
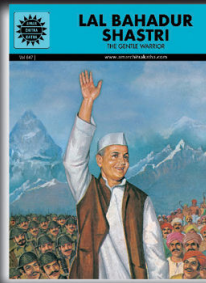
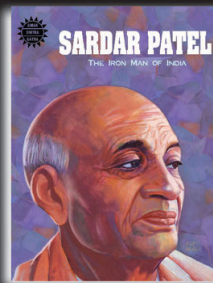


A.P.J. ABDUL KALAM

A scientist, a writer, a poet, a teacher, a visionary and the 11th President of India – Dr A.P.J. Abdul Kalam was all this and much more. One of the most beloved and admired men in recent times, Dr Kalam was a kind and gentle human being who believed firmly in the potential of India's people, especially her youth. He was a man who reached unimaginable heights but never forgot his roots. A man who brought his own brand of excellence and humility to everything he touched. He showed us the power of dedication and hard work and the power of honesty in character.

Most of all, he showed us the power of dreams. He said, "Dreams are not those that you see in your sleep...dreams are the things that do not let you sleep". The story of his life is a testimony to that belief.

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